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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

AN EVENTFUL LIFE,

CHIEFLY

PASSED IN THE ARMY.

BY A SOLDIER.

GLASGOW:
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July 9, 1930

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John Graham & Co. Printers.

TO HER,
WHO, BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE,
FIRST
LED HIM TO THAT CULTIVATION OF MIND,
WHICH HAS
PROVED AN INEXHAUSTABLE SOURCE OF PLEASURE,
EVEN
IN THE MIDST OF PRIVATION AND SUFFERING;
TO
~~his Mother~~
AS A
TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,
BY
THE AUTHOR.



Letter to the Editor.

— BARRACKS,
23d June, 1823.

MY DEAR M—.

ENCLOSED with this letter, I have sent you the rude sketch of my life, which I promised to forward, when I last saw you. It has been written by snatches, now and then, when I could find opportunity; and I have been induced to finish it more hastily than I at first intended, in consequence of expecting to leave Britain, once more, for a foreign station: whence it is doubtful whether I may ever return.

In drawing it up, I have studied to give a plain relation of facts, as they

fell under my observation, unbiassed by any regard to rank or wealth; and, if in pourtraying character, I have sometimes made an unlovely picture, the fault was in the original. I have also aimed more at giving a delineation of the feelings, manners and customs of those around me, than a description of the positions of the army, in a general engagement, or details of its movements, which from the local situation I held, I could only learn through the medium of others.

As I have written wholly from recollection, it can scarcely be expected that I could remember names of places and dates very correctly; but this will be of little consequence, as the public are already in possession of them through other sources. For the main point, namely, the truth of

the narrative, I can confidently appeal to all who served with me.

In the observations I have risked, it has been my wish to preserve that independence of spirit which I have always cherished, under every difficulty, and will continue to cherish to the last moment of my existence.

With regard to the publication of my work, I leave it wholly in your option either to publish it or not as circumstances may guide you.

I am little acquainted with the taste of the literary world; but I am much afraid that my humble production will scarcely pass the fiery ordeal of criticism, unaccustomed as I have been, to write with only a partial knowledge of grammar, and none of the rules of composition. However, I have so much faith to put in the public taste, that I believe the

work will rise or fall according to its intrinsic merit; and either way I will have no good reason to complain.

Even though it should fail, I will not consider my labour lost; for many an hour I have whiled away in writing it, which might otherwise have passed over me heavily enough. The pleasures of memory, I think, in many cases, are even superior to those of hope—particularly when we have awakened from life's young dream, and, from our experience of the past, have learned to distrust the future.

In writing this sketch, “I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again,” and again gone through all the interesting adventures of my life, without the fatigue, hardships and hunger, which too often accompanied them.

I have dwelt with “pleasing fond regret,” on the remembrance of

scenes of pure and simple pleasure, which have passed away, never to return, and mourned the loss of friends whose steady affection formed the solace of my life. You remember some of them; for they were yours as well as mine.

But amongst all, there is a regret nearly allied to a feeling of despair which swallows up every other. I allude to the manner in which I sacrificed every prospect by enlisting. What might I not have been had I not taken the fatal step, that cut me off from that society which would have been congenial to my mind!

“ But 'tis vain, all words are idle,
Words from me are vainer still,
But the thoughts we cannot bridle,
Force their way against the will.”

I would wish you to call on my
mother, and * * * *

x

I will write to you soon again, perhaps, to bid you a long farewell.

Meantime, believe me to be, as ever, your sincere friend.

JAMES

— — —

ADVERTISEMENT.

In laying the following narrative before the Public, I may perhaps have consulted my own feelings more than the public taste; but, in justice to myself, I must state that previous to the manuscript being sent to press, it was shown to several gentlemen of literary merit; and, it is in consequence of their report, that I have been induced to publish it.

With the exception of a very few verbal alterations, no change has been made on the original manuscript;

but, in consequence of the Author not being present to correct the press, some errors may have escaped notice: for which I must beg the indulgence of the public.

Circumstances, which will be evident to the reader, preclude me from saying anything of the author, more than that I served in the same regiment with him, during the Peninsular war; and I can vouch for the truth of all that he has related, so far as the army is concerned. I can state also, that since he first entered the service, his conduct has been in every respect exemplary.

H. M.

RECOLLECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHOR'S PARENTAGE—EDUCATION—EFFECTS OF ROMANCE READING—AIRY CASTLES—JOURNEY TO ARCADIA—DISAPPOINTMENT.

I WAS born in Glasgow: my father held a situation in a mercantile house, that enabled him to keep his family respectable; my mother had been married before, and had children by her first husband; but I was the only surviving child by my father. I was therefore his particular care, and no expense would have been spared on my education, had I been wise enough to appreciate the value of it; but, unfortunately for me, that was not the case. I had early learned to read; but novels, romances and fairy tales were



my favourite books, and soon superseded all other kinds of reading. By this means, my ideas of life were warped from reality, and the world I had pictured in my imagination was very unlike the one in which I lived. The sober realities of life became tiresome and tasteless. Still panting after something unattainable, I became displeased with my situation in life, and neglected my education—not because I disliked it: on the contrary, I was fond of learning, and used to form very feasible plans of study, wherein I omitted nothing that was necessary to form the accomplished gentleman. I could pleasingly skim over the whole course in my mind, and contemplate my future fame and wealth as the result; but when it came to detail, and I considered how many years of arduous study would be required to complete it, I was too impatient to put it into practice, I had acquired too great a facility at raising castles in the air, and embellishing them with my fancy, to submit to the drudgery of building on a more stable foundation. Thus, straining at shadows, I lost substantial good.

Amongst other books which fell into my hands, when very young, was Robinson Crusoe. It was a great favourite; and, at that time, I believe, I would have suffered shipwreck willingly, to be cast on an island like his. An island to one's self! I thought what a happiness! I have sat and dreamed for hours together, on what I would do in such a situation. I have often played truant from school, to wander into the fields, and read my favourite books; and, when I was not reading, my mind was perfectly bewildered with the romantic notions I had formed. Often have I travelled eagerly to the summit of some neighbouring hill, where the clouds seemed to mark the limits of the world I lived in, my mind filled with an indescribable expectation that I would there meet with something that would realize my wild ideas, some enchanted scene or other; and when I reached its summit, and found those expectations disappointed, still the next similar place had the same attraction. The sky, with the ever-varying figures of the clouds, was an inexhaustable field for my imagination to work in;

and the sea, particularly those views of it where the land could not be seen from the shore, raised indescribable feelings in my breast. The vessels leaving the coast, I thought, must contain happy souls; for they were going far away, and all my fancied happy worlds were there. Oh, thought I, if I could once pass that blue line that separates the ocean and the sky! —then would I be happy; for that seems to me the only barrier between me and happiness.

I was often beat for being absent from school, and urged to tell what was my reason for playing the truant. The reason I felt, but could not describe; and, the same fault recurring again and again, I was at last set down as incorrigible. What most surprised my friends, was that I never had any companions in my rambles; but a companion would have spoiled all my visions. Never did I enjoy such pure unmixed delight, as in those excursions; but it was transient. Every day's experience served to destroy some part of my enchanted structure; and now time and a more intimate knowledge of

the world have swept away the fabric, and left "not a wreck behind." Still memory hovers fondly over the spot where it once stood, with a feeling of regret, that those happy days are gone forever.

"So ill exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies and the crimes,
Of others or my own."

In some old romances which I had read, the life of a shepherd had been described in such glowing colours, that I became quite enamoured of it, and would not give my parents rest until they procured such a situation for me. It was in vain that they assured me I would find every thing different in that life from what I imagined. I could not believe it. They made some agreement with a farmer, from whom they got their milk and butter, to take me out with him to his farm, that I might learn the truth by experience. I set off with him on his buttermilk cart, my mind filled with the most extravagant anticipations of my new employment. I arrived at the farmer's house at night; and next morning I was called up at four o'clock, to my new avocation.

An old man was sent out with me, to show me my charge. I was left by him on a bleak hill, with four-score of sheep, and told that my breakfast and dinner would be brought out to me. I sat down to contemplate the scene before me. It was desolate enough, nothing but bog-land extending for miles on each side of me. There were no sylvan groves; for there was not a tree on the farm—no shepherds piping in the dale; for the shepherds there had neither pipe nor crook. I tried to transform the female servant, that was in my master's house, into a shepherdess, but it would not do. It was a horrible caricature: she was a strong masculine-looking Highland girl, anything but lovely or romantic. Surely, thought I, there must be some mistake here. I never spent such a lonely tiresome day. My flock seemed to think they had got a fool to deal with; for they run in every direction but the right one. It is true, I had a dog; but he did not understand my language. We had not been long enough acquainted; and, by the time night came, I was pretty well convinced

that the life of a shepherd was not what I had imagined it. Day after day passed, without realizing any of my expectations. My feet got sore running through the rough heather; and I returned to my parents about a month after, completely cured of that folly. One would think that this disappointment would have rendered me more cautious in forming opinions from the same source—but no! I was as bad as ever, unless in my ideas of a shepherd's life. Indeed, it was always my misfortune to pay dearly for my experience, and to profit little by that of others.

CHAPTER II.

A COMPANION—LOTTERY TICKET—EXPECTATIONS
—DISAPPOINTMENT—RESOLVES ON GOING TO
SEA—GREENOCK—LOOKING OUT FOR A BIRTH
—RECEPTION—PRESS-GANG AGENT—AN OLD
ACQUAINTANCE—HIS DESCRIPTION—BOUND
APPRENTICE TO A SHIP-OWNER—FITTING OUT
—PARTING WITH HIS FATHER—COMMENCES
SEAMANSHIP—PRACTISING..

I FOUND few boys of my own age, that entered into my notions. One indeed there was equally extravagant, and we were scarcely ever separate. Tired of living under the control of our parents, we determined to make a bold push at independence. We mustered as much money as bought the sixteenth of a lottery ticket. In the interval between buying and drawing—how we did dream! It never entered our minds that we would get less than the share of a prize of £30,000; and of course

the disposal of the cash was the constant theme of our conversation. At last the wished-for day arrived, on which we were to receive intelligence of the fate of our ticket. We did not go to inquire concerning it until night. With hearts fluttering with apprehension, we went to the shop where we had bought it. I would not go in: I sent in my companion. I durst scarcely look after him. To such an intense pitch of interest was my mind wrought up, that the criminal on his trial for some capital crime could not wait with more dreadful anxiety for the verdict of the jury, than I did for my companion to come out. He did come, but I was afraid to look him in the face, lest I should read disappointment in it. I waited for him to speak; but his tongue refused its office. I at last ventured to look in his face, and there I read the truth. Had he spoken and told me it was a blank, I might have doubted him, and thought he only joked me; but I could never doubt the expression of despair which I saw there depicted. Not a word was exchanged: we walked on in stupified vexation. After wandering

about for some time unconscious of where we were going, he at last burst into tears. I could have very willingly joined him; but I suspected that something else preyed on his mind. On asking him what distressed him so much, he said that part of the money with which he had purchased his share of the lottery ticket was the balance of an account, due by a person to his father, which he had received without his knowledge. He had depended on the receipt of his prize, to pay it with interest; but now those hopes were blasted: he could never face home—his countenance would betray him, and his father was very severe.

He said he was determined to go to Greenock, and engage with some merchant vessel bound to Surinam, in the West Indies. He had an uncle a planter there, and of course when he arrived there was no danger of him. His uncle would procure his discharge from the ship, and the result would be that he would become a gentleman. I listened eagerly to this. We had often expatiated on the pleasure of seeing foreign countries; and I resolved

to accompany him, not doubting but his uncle would provide for me for his sake. Any thing like adventure was always welcome to me, and my mind was soon decided.

We had no money however to carry us to Greenock; but I recollect a person who owed my father money, and I proposed to go and ask it from him in my father's name. This was the first time I had ventured to do any thing so glaringly dishonest; and I hesitated long: I passed the door a dozen times before I mustered effrontery enough to go in. It was drawing near the hour of shutting up, and I was obliged to resolve. I went in and asked him for the money. The candle burnt dim, and I stood as much in the shade as possible; but I am sure he noticed my embarrassment. However, he gave me the money; and, whenever I got it, we hurried out of the town immediately.

We travelled all night, and next morning arrived in Greenock. After getting some breakfast, and brushing ourselves up a little, although we were very tired, we

resolved on looking out for a vessel. On inquiry, we learned that there was no vessel in the harbour bound for Surinam. This was a disappointment; but, we thought, if we were once in the West Indies, we would find little difficulty in getting there.

The first vessel we came to, was a ship bound to Kingston, Jamaica. We went on board; and, inquiring for the captain, asked if he wanted any men. He looked at us with a smile of contempt, and eyeing us from head to foot, "*Men*," said he, laying a particular emphasis on the word (for neither of us was more than thirteen years of age), "it would be a pretty vessel that would be mann'd with such *men as you*—Whaur hae ye come frae na? Ye'll be some runawa weaver callans, frae Glasgow, I'se warrant; but ye had better gang hame again; for I'm thinkin' ye'll like the sea waur than the loom." This was a "stomacher" at the outset. I was galled by his reply; but I thought some one else would be glad to get us.

We tried several other vessels with

nearly the same success. At last, tired and crest-fallen, we were going home to our lodging; when an old man, who had seen us going from one vessel to another, accosted us, and asked if we wanted a ship. We replied we did. "Oh, then," said he, "you need not want that long; for, if you go with me, I will soon find one for you. Where do you wish to go?" We replied to Surinam. "Then, you could not have come in a better time; for there is a vessel lying in the roads ready to sail for that place." We were overjoyed at this intelligence; "but will they take us?" said we. "Oh, to be sure they will, and glad to get you. I'll take you on board now if you like." We assented, and he went to procure a boat to take us on board.

When he was gone, a sailor, that was standing by, and saw us talking to the old man, came up, and asked us what he had been saying. When we told him, he said the sooner we were off out of that the better; for the fellow, that had been talking to us, was one of a gang of rascals in pay of the press-gang; and that, instead

of putting us on board of a vessel such as he described, he would put us on board of the tender; and that there was actually no such vessel in the roads as the one he mentioned. We lost no time in taking his advice, and hurried home to our lodgings.

When there, my spirits began to sink; and the thought of how I had left my parents, and the distress they must be in about me, completely overcame me, and I burst into tears. My companion felt nearly as bad as myself. We resolved to return home, and ask forgiveness of our parents; but, as we were fatigued with travelling, we put off our return until next morning.

Next morning, when we got up, our minds had recovered some of their former elasticity; and we did not feel so much disposed to return as we did the preceding evening. The idea of the ridicule which we would have to bear from our acquaintance, and, on my part, the stigma which would be thrown on my character for drawing the money in my father's name, seemed to be insurmountable barriers in the way of our return; and we walked

out into the town with our minds still undecided.

In crossing the main street, we met one of our old school-fellows, who had run away from his parents about six months before. He had just returned from the West Indies; and, having leave for a few days to go to Glasgow to see his friends, he had got himself rigged out in the true jolly-tar style—his jacket and trowsers of fine blue cloth, white stockings, short-quartered shoes, a coloured silk handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, over which the neck of his checked shirt was folded down, a glazed hat on his head, and an enormous quid of tobacco in his cheek. In fact, he was so completely metamorphosed that we scarcely knew him; for when he was at school, he was remarked for being a soft dull sort of boy.

When he saw us, he seized each of our hands with his, and exclaimed, “Oh, D—n my eyes, Jem and Bill, how are ye my hearties? what has brought you to Greenock: be ye looking out for a birth?” We were expressing our pleasure at having met him, when he said, “Don’t be stand-

ing here in the street. Let's go and get a glass of grog." We remarked that it would look very odd for boys like us to go into a tavern and call for liquor; but Tom thought that a very foolish objection, and, leading the way into a tavern, we followed him. As he walked in before us, I perceived that he had altered his manner of walking quite to the rocking gait of the veteran sailor; and I certainly thought that Tom had been an apt scholar; for, in our eyes, he seemed to be as finished a sailor as if he had been 20 years at sea. From being a boy of few words, he had acquired a surprising volubility of tongue, along with an affected English accent. He could curse and swear, chew tobacco and drink grog: and, although we perceived a good deal of affectation in what Tom did and said, still we were disposed to think him a very clever fellow. When we were seated over our grog, we disclosed our minds to him, and inquired if he could assist us in getting a vessel. Tom looked grave on the subject, and, sinking his voice from the high English accent he had acquired so rapidly, he said

he was not sure whether he could get a vessel for us or not ; "but," said he, "in the mean time drink your grog, and we will see about that after."

Warmed by the liquor, Tom began and gave us an account of his voyage, which, as he afterwards owned, he had painted in very extravagant colours. We were so charmed with his description that we gave up all idea of going home ; and we adjourned from the tavern to Tom's lodgings, where he displayed to our "wondering eyes" the treasures he had acquired by his West India voyage—conch shells, cocoa nuts, and stalks of Indian corn, which were designed to grace his mother's chimney-piece, and excite the wonder of her visitors..

Between the liquor we had drank, and what we had heard and seen, we were in high spirits, and went out to take a walk through the town; but, going up the main street, towards the head inn, I met my father full in the face. He had just alighted off the coach from Glasgow, in search of us. I thought I would have sunk into the earth. Confounded and ashamed, I

stood like a felon caught in some depredation. Tom set off, and left William and I to manage affairs as we could. My father was the first who broke silence.—“Well, James,” said he, “will you tell me the meaning of this jaunt you have taken? but,” said he, “I am going to Mr. C—’s, and you had better come with me, and we will talk over the matter there.” We followed him without saying a word, and, when we were seated in Mr. C—’s, he again asked my reason for leaving home. I looked in William’s face and saw he was determined. I then said we were resolved on going to sea, and that we had come to Greenock for that purpose. Mr. C. and my father said every thing they could to dissuade us from our foolish resolution; but to little purpose. The idea of the ridicule we would have to bear from our acquaintance if we returned, and Tom’s exaggerated description of the pleasures of a sea life, had confirmed us in our determination.

“Well,” said my father (after he had reasoned the matter with me, and painted what a sailor’s life was in reality, with

little effect); "Well," said he, "I might exert the right I have over you, as a parent, in forcing you to return; but I will not do that. If you have so far forgot your duty to me, and to yourself, after all that I have done for you, as to throw yourself away as a common ship-boy, where you can have no opportunity of learning any thing but wickedness, you may do it; but remember my words—*you will repent it*, when you will perhaps have no father to question the propriety of your conduct. Indeed, after the dishonest action you have been guilty of at home, I don't know but your presence would be more disagreeable to me than your absence, unless you altered much for the better; and, if I have any very anxious wish that you should return, it is more on your poor mother's account than my own.

"Oh, how could you leave us in the manner you did, without a cause?—The first night you were absent from home your mother was frantic about you. She wandered from place to place in search of you. She was sure you were not in life—

that some accident had befallen you. When she knows the truth, how cruel must she think you!—Oh, James, after all our care and attention to you, I am afraid you will bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

Here the tears came into my father’s eyes, and his voice became choked. I could bear it no longer, and I burst into tears. My first impulse was to throw myself at his feet, and beg his forgiveness; but the obstacles, which were in the way of my return before, again recurring to my mind, prevented me, and I only wept in sullen silence.

“Say no more to him now,” said Mr. C. “Give him until to-morrow to think on what you have said; and, if he is then of the same opinion, we will procure a good ship for him, and see him properly fitted out.” My father took his advice, and did not resume the subject that day. He wrote off, however, to William’s father, telling where his son was.

Next morning, he arrived and insisted on taking him home by force, and even beat and kicked him in the house we were

in; but my father and Mr. C. interfered, and representing to him how foolish his conduct was, as he might be sure the boy would take the first opportunity of running away again. He was at last brought to reason, and he agreed to be guided by my father. We were again asked what we had determined on doing, and I replied that we were fixed in our determination of going to sea; for William was so terrified for his father that he durst not express his opinion before him.

It was then proposed to get us bound immediately, as my father could not be spared from his business, and was obliged to return next day. Mr. C. took us to a friend of his, a Mr. G. a respectable merchant and ship-owner, who was in want of apprentices at that time for some of his vessels. We were there bound for three years, and attached to a letter-of-marque brig, which carried 18 guns, loading at that time for New Providence.

The afternoon was spent in purchasing the necessary articles to fit me out. When that was finished, my father, feeling uneasy on my mother's account, resolved

to return to Glasgow that night. Before going away, he said, “ I could almost wish your mother saw you before you went away—and yet, I don’t know—perhaps it would be better that she would not. You will soon find yourself among very strange company ; and, if I am not wrong informed, company from whom you will be able to learn little that is good ; but I trust you will remember the religious instruction you have received from your parents, when you are far away from them ; and, although you have grieved and disobeyed your earthly parents, I hope you will not forget your Creator. Remember his eye is on you, wherever you go ; and, although you may be bereft of every other stay, still he will be ever with you, to succour, and to help, if you call upon him. Farewell, my boy, God help you !”

My heart sunk within me. As the coach started, I saw him wipe the tears from his eyes. I must surely be a hardened wretch, thought I, to persist so resolutely in what I know to be wrong, and what is breaking the heart of my parents. I was

roused from my reflections by some one slapping me on the shoulder. It was Tom—"Well, my boys, so you have got bound to our owner—have you?" "Do you belong to Mr. G. also?" said I. "To be sure," said he, "and I don't think but I will get into your ship too, although she sails so soon; for I don't like the one I am in."

We felt well pleased that Tom was to be our shipmate; and, in the contemplation of all the good fortune that we thought awaited us (I am ashamed to say), that I nearly forgot my distressed parents.

As for William, the moment his father set off (for my father and his went up to Glasgow together), he seemed quite relieved poor fellow! His mother had died when he was very young, and his father being a man of a morose severe disposition, he scarcely knew what parental tenderness was.—How different from me! He had some excuse for what he had done; but I had none.

Tom went up to Glasgow next day, to see his friends; and a day or two after, William and I were sent on board, to

commence our seamanship. The first day or two passed away well enough. There was little or nothing to do. The third day, the mate called us aft to the quarter deck. "Do you see that flag," said he, "pointing to the mast head?" It had got entangled in the signal hal- liards. "Now, let me see which of you will get up soonest and clear it."—Will and I got on the shrouds, and mounted with great alacrity, until we got to that part of the shrouds which takes a sweep outwards to meet the edge of the top. Will was up over it in a twinkling; for he had been used to mount the rigging of the vessels at the Broomielaw: but I thought it a dangerous-looking place, and seeing a hole through the top, by the side of the mast, I proceeded to squeeze myself through it; which being an offence against the laws of good seamanship (as the sailor's name for it denotes, being called the *lubber's hole*), the mate seized a rope's end on deck, and, running up the shrouds after me, called out, "You young dog, is that the way you are taking?" I made haste to rectify my error by taking

the same route that Will had pursued; but, in my haste, and the fear of the rope's end together, when I reached the edge of the top, I let go my hold with my feet, and, being suspended by my hands, would soon have dropped on the deck, or into the sea, had the mate not caught hold, and assisted me up. Will had by this time got as far as the cross-trees; but he was foiled in his attempts to climb up the royal mast. The mate however thought we had done enough for once; and we were ordered down. If I was bad at getting up, I was worse at coming down; but I took care not to let go with my feet again.

Our exercise at this kind of work was continued every day, while in harbour, and we soon became expert at it.

CHAPTER III.

SAILS FROM GREENOCK—CURE FOR SEA SICKNESS
—STEERAGE MESS—INSTALLED IN OFFICE—
BLUNDER—FORE-CASTLE—MY COMRADES—THE
BOYS MUSTERED—APPOINTED TO WATCHES—
DUTIES—USAGE.

At last, the long-expected day of sailing arrived, and among the first of the men who came on board was Tom. He had received liberty to join our ship, and brought a farewell letter from my parents. Men and boys, we mustered in all about sixty hands. They were mostly all, when they came on board, “half-seas-over;” and the ship was in great confusion.

Towards evening, it began to blow fresh, and I became miserably sick. No one took any notice of me, unless when I went to the weather-side of the vessel, to vomit, when some one or other of my tender-hearted shipmates would give me a kick, or a push, and “D——n my eyes, to go to leeward.” In this state, I was

knocked about, from one place to another, until at last I lay down in the waste of the vessel, on the lee side, with my head opposite to one of the scuppers.* I had not been long there, when some one came running to the side to vomit. I looked up to see who it was, and saw poor Tom in nearly as bad a plight as myself. I was too sick to speak to him, or I would have asked why he had omitted this in his description of the pleasures of a sea life.

I had not seen William from the time I became sick; but at that time I could feel interested for no one, nor about anything. I only wished I was on shore, and nothing should ever tempt me to put my foot on board of a vessel again. I was sure that I was near my end; for every attempt I made to vomit, I thought my very inside would come up.

Night came on, and the weather being cold, I began to wish that I could get below. I crawled to the first hatchway I could find, which happened to be the steerage. As this place was appropriated to the petty officers of the ship, and they

* **Scuppers**, the holes by which the water runs off the deck.

being all employed on deck, I was allowed to get down unmolested. There were some of the cables coiled in the steerage; and, as I had experienced the inconvenience of being in the way, I crept in as far as I could, beyond the cables, where some old sails were lying, and there, although not relieved from my sickness, I was at least free from annoyance.

I was not long there when the steerage mess came down to get their supper; and I quaked with terror when I heard the gunner say, "I wonder where all those d——d boys are. I can't get one of them to do either one thing or another." "They'll be stowed away in some hole or other I'll warrant ye," said the boatswain, "but if I had hold of them, I would let them feel the weight of a rope's end on their backs." I strove to keep in my breath lest they should hear me; but, at that moment I felt the desire to vomit so strong, that, in spite of all my efforts to suppress it, I made such a noise that I was overheard. "Who the devil's that?" cried the boatswain. "Some of the rascals

stowed away in the cable teir, by G—d. Hold the lanthorn, and I'll haul him out whoever he is." Already I thought I felt the rope's end on my shoulders, when I was unexpectedly relieved from my apprehensions, by the mate calling them on deck to arrange the watches for the night. While they were gone, I squeezed myself in behind some boxes, where I was pretty sure they could not get at me. When they came down again they had forgotten the circumstance; and those whose watch was below got into their hammocks.

Before day-light a little, I felt inclined to go on deck, as I was nearly suffocated in the place I was in. I slipped out cautiously, got up the ladder without disturbing any of them, and, making for the head of the vessel, commenced vomiting again. I had felt pretty well settled, when my head was down; but, whenever I got up, the sickness returned. My stomach was completely empty, and my efforts were most distressing. An old sailor who was standing near me advised me to take a drink of salt water. I

thought it was a rough cure; I tried it however, but it was no sooner down than up again. "Take another drink," said he; I did so—the same result followed. He advised me to take a third. "Oh, no," I replied, "I can take no more." I then leaned over the lee bow of the vessel; and, whether it was the fresh air or the salt water I know not, but I soon got better; and, in the course of an hour or two, began to move about pretty briskly. My appetite was sharp, and I could have ate heartily, I thought, if I had had any thing to eat.

While I was stirring about, the carpenter came forward to me and inquired if I was sick. I said no. "Will you have any objection to attend our mess?" "I don't know," said I, "what have I to do?" "Only draw our provision, and boil our kettle morning and evening." "Very well—I am willing." He took me down to the steerage, and showed me where the things lay. When breakfast-time came I got their kettle boiled, and brought down their mess of bargoo, and sat down to take my breakfast with them; but, before I had taken half a dozen

spoonfuls, it began to discompose my stomach; and, getting up to pass them for the deck, the motion of rising brought the contents of my stomach up to my mouth. I endeavoured to keep it down; but was obliged to give it vent, and it flew like water from a fire engine over the mess. The boatswain, who was a surly old fellow, and who had been the principal sufferer, rose up in a fury, and, seizing the wooden dish that held the bargoo, threw it at my head. I escaped the blow of the dish; but the contents came right on my face and blinded me. I tried to grope my way up the ladder; but they did not give me time to get up; for they threw me out of the hatchway; and I fell like a log on the deck. When I got to my feet the whole of the seamen on deck gathered round, and began to jeer me on my appearance; but I managed to flounder on through them to the head, where I got some water and cleaned myself. Ah, thought I, this is cruel usage; but I could scarcely refrain from laughing at the idea of spoiling their mess!

I walked about the deck for some time,

ruminating on my folly in exchanging my comfortable home for a place like this. Towards dinner-time, the carpenter came and asked me to prepare the mess dishes for dinner; but I told him he might find some one else, for I would not do it. "The more d---d fool you are," said he, "you will soon find yourself worse off."

I was then obliged to shift my things into the forecastle amongst the crew. Here I found William lying in one of the births, so sick he could not lift his head. When he saw me he beckoned me to him. "Oh, James," said he, "this is misery. I wish we were at home again; but I will never live to return." "No fear of that," said I, "I was as sick as you are, and I am now nearly well." At this moment the vessel gave a heave and down I came on the deck. William began to make cascades, and I was soon as bad as ever, and got tumbled into the birth beside him. Shortly after, the seamen's dinner was brought down, and having served themselves, one of them called out, "You, green horns, in there, will you have some

beef and biscuit?" "No, no," said I, "but if you will be kind enough to open my chest, you will find a cake of gingerbread in it—I will thank you to hand it to me." While he was searching for the gingerbread, he cast his eyes on a large case bottle, filled with whiskey, which Mr. C. had given me when I parted with him. He immediately gave up his search for the gingerbread, and, hauling out the bottle and holding it up, he cried, "D—n my eyes, messmates, if I ha'n't found a prize."—"Here with it," cried a dozen voices at once, and, in spite of my remonstrances, they deliberately handed it round until there was not above a glass left. "Oh, d——n," said one of them, "give the boy a drop of his own grog;" but I could not look at it—the smell was sickening. "No, no," said I, "send that after the rest." "Right," said one of them, "boys have no use for grog." "Will you give me the gingerbread now?" said I. "Oh, bye the bye, I had forgot that, here it is for you, my hearty."

The most of them went on deck, and left William and I to reflect on the

justice of their appropriation of my property. However, the liquor was a thing I cared little about, and it gave me the less uneasiness. We were now allowed to lie quietly enough until night, when those whose watch was below came down to go to bed, one of them came to the birth, where William and I were lying, and seizing him by the neck, cried out, "Hollo, who the devil's this in my birth?" "It is two of the johnnie-raws that are sick," replied one of them. "Johnnie-raw or johnnie-roasted, by G—d, they must get out of that; for I want to turn in;" and out we were bundled. During the whole course of that night we were knocked about, from one place to another, by the different watches who came below.

Next morning early, the word was passed for the boys to go aft to the quarter deck. It was hard rooting them out; but at last we were mustered—six in all. When we were assembled, the mate, addressing us, said "I think I have given you long-enough time to recover from your sickness. You, Tom, have no right to be sick. You were at sea before." I looked at Tom:

there was not a more miserable-looking object amongst us. I could scarcely allow myself to believe that he was the same being whom we saw swaggering on the streets of Greenock a few days before. We were then appointed to different watches. William and I were luckily appointed to the same one ; and our watch being on duty at the time, we were ordered to scrub the hen coops, and feed the fowls while the men washed the deck. The boys were always made the drudges in every thing dirty and disagreeable.

One part of their duty I could never get reconciled to, which was to watch the hogs, and when they dunged to throw it over board. This sunk the life of a ship boy in my eyes to a very low ebb ; but the duty of the ship was little in comparison to the way in which we were teased and ill used by the sailors. I have often been roused out of my sleep after a fatiguing watch, and just when I had fallen into a profound sleep, to go and fetch a drink of water for some of the crew. A fellow, of the name of Donald M'Millan, was one of our chief tormentors

He used to invent new mortifications for us ; and he was of such a savage, brutal disposition that he would beat and abuse the boys for the most trifling fault, and often without cause. I am sure, if the conduct of the men had been reported to the captain, he would not have allowed the boys to be used in the manner they were. So much were we in awe of them however that we were afraid to say anything concerning our usage ; for we knew that they could find numberless methods of tormenting without openly beating us.

I began, however, to get used to the sea ; and, plucking up spirit, I strove to get through as well as I could. It was, however, with a great effort that I could prevent my spirits from sinking under the many hardships and contumely I had to endure. Nothing but the hope of leaving the vessel, when she returned home, kept me alive ; but the thought I might never return threw a gloom even over that hope. Poor William lost all heart ; he became melancholy and moping, and he used to cry for hours when we were on watch at night together. In this state he was ill calcu-

lated for the duty he had to perform, and was brow-beat by almost every one in the ship. This sunk his naturally buoyant spirits: he at length became so accustomed to ill usage, that he seemed afraid I would also turn against him. I however had known him in happier days, and knew also his abilities: his feelings, however, were morbidly acute, and little calculated to struggle through the ill usage which a ship apprentice had to endure.

CHAPTER IV.

TRADE WINDS—FAIRY VISIONS—DELIGHTFUL NIGHTS—SEAMEN'S DIVERSIONS—STORY TELLING—SUPERSTITIONS—NAVAL APPARITION.

As we proceeded on our voyage the weather became delightful; and, getting into the trade winds, we got on so pleasantly, often for days together, without changing a sail, that, had we not been tormented by the seamen, we would have been comparatively comfortable.

The only time that I enjoyed myself was, when my turn came to look out aloft—seated on the crosstrees, away from the din of the deck, with the clear blue sky above me, and the sea extending far as the eye could reach around me. It was there I almost realized some of the fairy scenes I had pictured in my imagination. I felt myself in an enchanted world of my own. I would sit watching the clouds as they passed along before me, comparing

their shape to some romantic image in my mind, and peopling them with corresponding inhabitants, enchanted castles, knights and ladies bright, tournaments and battles—all passed in shadowy review before my enraptured imagination; while mighty genii, riding in their cloudy chariots, presided o'er the scene. At other times, my fancy would picture angels winging their way from heaven to earth; and, at times, when the sun would dart his rays from among some fleecy-textured clouds, co-mingling every bright and heavenly colour, it would lighten up my very soul with rapture; and seemed to open a passage between it and heaven:—but words must fail to convey a description of what can only be felt by those whose imaginations are as much heated as mine was then. So lost would I be in those reveries that I did not feel the time passing; and, when the man would come up to relieve me, I would often volunteer to stop his two hours also. When I came down on deck, I felt, as it were, cast from heaven to earth, and used to long for my turn to look out again. These

were the only pleasures I enjoyed unmolested and unenvied; for few of my comrades required any pressing to allow me to remain in their place.

Sun-rise and sun-set at sea, in good weather, are beyond description grand and sublime. They present scenes which would raise emotions in the coldest heart. The nights were delightful; the moon shone there in “cloudless majesty.” The air was so cool and pleasant, that it was preferred by the seamen to the day; instead of going below, they would gather in knots on the deck, and play at various games, or tell stories—many of them were good at this; one of them a Swede, had as large a collection as any person I ever knew: they were those of his country—mostly terrific—ghosts and men possessed of supernatural powers, were the heroes of his stories.* The flying Dutch-

* One of the stories he narrated was of a seaman, with whom his father had sailed. He was a wonderful fellow, he could arrest a ship in full sail. When he wanted liquor, he had nothing to do but bore a hole in the mast, and out flowed rum, brandy, or any liquor he wished for. He once had committed some crime, for which he was sentenced to be flogged; the crew were assembled, and the culprit stripped and tied up, the boatswain raised his brawny arm to give the lash; but, by

man, and many other naval apparitions were talked off, and descended on with much gravity. Sailors, in general, are very superstitious, and these stories were listened to with the greatest attention.

One night the weather was hazy, when I was appointed to look out a-head along with an old sailor, who was remarkable

for his power of foretelling events. He had been a sailor for many years, and had some invisible power, his arm was arrested in the air, and he stood with it stretched out, unable to bring it down. The master-at-arms raised his cane to strike the boatswain for his seeming neglect of duty, and his arm was arrested in like manner. The captain, enraged to see both boatswain and master-at-arms in this strange position, drew his sword, and raised it, to let it fall on some of their heads, when he shared the same fate. Thus, all three stood with their arms upraised in air; nor would our hero release them from their awkward position, until he was pardoned and taken down!! Some time after, he had committed another crime; but they were afraid his power was too potent on board for them to proceed against him there, and he was conveyed ashore, and tried. In addition to the alleged crime, they brought forward a charge of dealing with the devil; the proof was reckoned conclusive, and he was sentenced to suffer death. He gave himself no uneasiness about it. The day arrived on which he was to be executed; and the guard entered his prison for the purpose of conveying him to the place of execution. When they entered, he was busily drawing a ship upon the wall with chalk; he requested them to wait a moment until he would finish it; they did so; when he had done, he bid them about him adieu; and, lifting his foot, as if it were to step into his mimic ship, he disappeared from their eyes in a moment, and was never after heard of more!!

for being an attentive listener, when any stories were telling. The moon was up; but a dense curtain of clouds hid her almost completely from our view. The wind came in gusts, and swept the clouds along in irregular masses. Sometimes a doubtful light would be thrown around us; again a dark cloud would intervene, and we could scarcely see the end of the gib-boom. The wind whistled through the rigging of the vessel occasionally with a low murmuring sound, then it would rise gradually to such a fury, that we could scarcely hear each other talk. We were anxiously looking out, when he asked me if I did not see something like a sail a-head. I replied that I did not. He pointed to the place where he imagined he saw it. I looked again. A partial gleam of light, occasioned by a cloud of a lighter texture passing over the moon, being thrown on the place, I really thought I saw something like a sail. He did not wait for any more investigation, but gave the alarm. The mate came forward to see it; but the light was so uncertain, that he could not decide on what it was.

The whole watch gathered about the bows of the vessel, every one having something to say on the subject. One pretended he saw a sail plainly—she was a square-rigged vessel, with all her sails set; another said she was schooner rigged. Ominous whispers now began to go round, intimating that her appearance was any thing but natural. The mate, hearing some hints that were dropped, said “there was a cursed deal too much of that ghost story-telling of late; and he would lay his head to a marlin-spike, that this would turn out to be no sail after all.” At this moment (luckily for his prediction) the moon broke through in all her splendour; and, as far as the eye could reach, not a speck on the surface of the dark-blue waters could be traced. The laugh was now turned against those who had pretended to see the sail; but they only shook their heads doubtfully, and wished that nothing bad might follow. I venture to say that every one on board joined in that wish.

CHAPTER V.

HALES A VESSEL BOUND TO GREENOCK—LETTER-
WRITING—FRENCH PRIVATEER—CALLED TO
QUARTERS—A BROADSIDE—SHE SHEERS OFF—
NEAR THE LAND—“CAPE FLYAWAY”—COME TO
ANCHOR—PRESS-BOAT—APPEARANCE OF THE
ISLAND, &c.—UNLOADING.

A FEW days after that, we fell in with a vessel which we hailed, and found she was bound to Greenock from Jamaica. She brought to; and all those who wished to send letters to their friends were ordered to make haste, and write them. I got out my writing materials; but I was at a loss what to say. Had I been inclined to speak the truth, I would have been at no loss; but I could not bear the idea of owning how grossly I had been deceived in my ideas of a sailor's life. However, I believe I gave them room to think that I did not like it very well. I had lost so much time in resolving what

to write, that the letters were called for before I had time to give any particulars. When I was sealing my letter, I ardently wished I could have insinuated myself inside of it.

Nothing more particular occurred during our voyage, until a few days before we made the land. One morning early, a sail appeared to windward. The captain, looking at her through his telescope, gave it as his opinion that she was a French privateer. All hands were called to quarters: and, as she bore down upon us, the captain's opinion was confirmed, for she fired a gun, and hoisted French colours. We were well manned, and carried as many guns as she appeared to do. Every thing was prepared for action; only the guns were not run out, and the ports were down. The captain had ordered all the men, with the exception of the petty officers, to lie down on the deck, concealed behind the bulwarks, until he gave the word of command. She was bearing fast down upon us, when I was ordered to the magazine to hand up ammunition. I was frightened enough

when on deck ; but when below, I became much more so. It was not long before a broadside was fired. I was sure it was from the enemy. I was stunned, and fell flat on my face. "God be merciful to me !" said I ; for I was sure we were going to the bottom. In a minute after, I was surprised with the men cheering on deck. I mounted the ladder, and venturing my head up the hatchway, saw the strange ship a good way to leeward of us, making all the sail she could. On inquiring I found that she had borne down close on us, thinking we were an unarmed merchant ship, and ordered us to strike. The reply we gave was what had alarmed me so much ; for our men, starting to their feet on the word of command from the captain, ran out the guns, and gave her a broadside. She was so completely taken in by the reception she met with, that she sheered off without firing a shot. The captain's orders were, not to deviate from his course, or else we might have captured her ; as it was, she escaped.

We now drew near the land, and the

lead was frequently used to ascertain what sort of a bottom we had.* Pieces of sugar-cane, melons, and fruit of various kinds, were floating about; birds, in great numbers, hovered about the ship; and every thing intimated that the land was nigh. It was my turn to look out aloft, and I made sure of the bottle of rum which is usually given to the man who espies land first. I was not long up, when I thought I saw land off the lee bow. I watched it attentively. It became better defined every minute. I was positive it was land, and I sung out "land, ho" with a joyous voice. The intelligence ran through the crew; and I saw them skipping about on deck, seemingly delighted with the news. The mate came up beside me to see where the land lay. I pointed it out to him; but it soon altered its appearance, and began slowly to move up from the verge of the horizon, and in less than ten minutes not a vestige of the appearance remained. To me it looked like

* There is a cavity in the bottom of the lead, which is filled with tallow, to which sand or gravel, composing the bed of the sea, adheres.

enchantment ; but I learned from the mate, that such sights were not uncommon, and were termed by the seamen “Cape Flyaway.”

In the course of the day, we made the real land, but were too late to get into the harbour that night. However, next morning early we got in, and came to anchor nearly opposite Fort Charlotte, Town of Nassau, after a passage of six weeks. As we entered the harbour, we found a sloop-of-war lying there ; and some of our men, afraid of being pressed, took a boat, and made towards the shore : but the officers of the man-of-war observing them, they sent a boat in pursuit. Our fellows pulled hard, and would have made the shore before them, had they not fired a musket shot or two, and obliged them to lie to. They were then all taken on board the sloop-of-war. In the course of the day, however, they were all sent back, with the exception of Donald M'Millan, who had given some insolence to the officers ; and they sent word that they had kept him to teach him better manners. The boys did not mourn much at his

detention, nor I believe did any of the crew; for his disposition was such, that every one hated him.

We were not long at anchor before we were surrounded by canoes from the shore, with black fellows in them, selling fruit of various kinds, not common in Britain. Here we got rid of some of our money, in exchange for bananas, guavas, and pine apples; and I almost forgot all my sufferings in the novelty of the scene around me. The white sandy beach, the light ornamented wooden buildings, walks bordered by palm and cocoa-nut trees, with the singular dresses of the planters, and their negroes, were objects which made me think myself in a new world. In the course of the day we got off fresh beef and plenty of vegetables, which was a treat, having had nothing but salt provision from the time of leaving Greenock; and, to complete our happiness, we got an extra allowance of rum sent from the owners of the cargo.

Next day we began to deliver the cargo. There was no quay, but wharfs here and there to the different stores. When

the tide was in, we got our boats unloaded by means of a crane ; but when the tide was out, we were obliged to roll the hogsheads from the boats into the sea, and wading up to the middle to roll them out before us to the shore. This was most fatiguing and disagreeable work ; and we were not sorry when it was finished. On Sundays (which is the negro's market-day in the West Indies) the half of the crew alternately got leave to go ashore. William and I happened to be of the first party, and we were delighted with every thing around us ; but we could not discover that the inhabitants were disposed to give their money away for nothing, any more than at home. Nor could we find anything to justify the notion, that a rapid fortune could be acquired there, without similar exertion to that we had been accustomed to see in other places. Mechanics and clerks had very moderate salaries ; and, certainly, most necessary things cost much higher than at home. We took a thorough view of the town ; and, after purchasing some shells and other curiosities, we came on

board well pleased with the holiday we had had on shore. Soon after this, we began to take in our cargo, which principally consisted of rum, cotton and coffee.

CHAPTER VI.

STORM—FINISH TAKING IN CARGO—SAILOR'S
CHEVO—FIGHT—SET SAIL HOMEWARD—GALE
—WILLIAM DROWNED—ARRIVE IN GREENOCK
—RETURN HOME—BECOME DISCONTENTED—IN-
LISTMENT—PARTING WITH MY PARENTS.

As yet it had been delightful weather, only excessively warm in the middle of the day; but the mornings and evenings were very pleasant. The third morning, after we began to take in our cargo, came in sultry and close. The air was oppressive; the clouds hung low and heavy; and, ere long, the rain burst out in torrents. This had not continued ten minutes, until we were up to our knees in water on the deck. It poured down so fast that it could not escape by the scuppers. The earth seemed threatened with another deluge. The whole face of the heavens was dark as night. The crew

were all employed striking the top-gallant masts, lowering the yards, and making every thing snug. "This is shocking rain!" said I to an old sailor, who stood near me. "Yes," said he; "but we will have worse than rain bye and bye." He had scarcely said so, when the heavens seemed to open, and a flash of lightning burst forth, so strong and vivid, that it took the sight from my eyes. A clap of thunder followed so loud and long, that it must have appalled the stoutest heart. Flash after flash succeeded each other, and the roll of the thunder was incessant. I thought the last day was come. Heaven and earth seemed jumbled together in one mass of fire; and the continued noise of the thunder struck my imagination as the result of the fabric falling to ruin.

Towards the afternoon the wind blew with great fury. The vessels in the harbour began to drag their anchors, and before night many of them were on shore; but we were well moored, and did not stir. The storm continued the greater part of the night; and such a night I hope I will never see again. No one

would go below. We did not know the moment the lightning might strike the vessel, and perhaps send her to the bottom. It is in vain for me to attempt to convey any adequate description of that dreadful night in words. No one can form any idea of its awfulness, unless he had seen it. The men stood huddled in groups, on the deck, in silence. Indeed it was useless to speak, for they could not be heard; nor scarcely could they see each other, unless when the lightning shot its awful glare athwart their faces, and made their horror visible for an instant; and the livid cadaverous colour it shed over their countenances, gave them an expression truly appalling.

About one o'clock in the morning, the storm began to moderate: the flashes of lightning became weaker, and less frequent; the awful crashing of the thunder changed into a hoarse growl, and the intervals between allowed us again to hear its echo from the shore. By two the storm had so much subsided that the seamen, with the exception of the har-

bour watch, went below to their hammocks.

I was surprised, next morning, when I got up at sunrise, to see no vestige of the night's storm remaining. All was calm and serene, save a pleasant breeze from the shore, which brought the most delicious odours along with it. The sun rose with unusual brightness, and all nature seemed refreshed and renovated. We could not indeed have imagined that there had been a storm the preceding night, if the effects of its fury had not been visible in the roofless buildings and stranded vessels around us.

Our vessel had suffered little or no damage. We got on with our loading, and in a short time we were ready for sea. The day before we sailed, the owners sent a present of a bottle of rum to each man, to hold a sort of "chevo," as the sailors called it. The decks were cleared, and we sat down in groups with our bottles, and commenced drinking. All went on very well for a time. The song and joke went round, and harmony and good humour prevailed. But, when

the drink began to "take their heads," some of them that had differences during the voyage began to "tell their minds." The result was, that they came to high words, and from that to blows. The rest of the crew took different sides, according as they were interested; and the deck soon became a scene of confusion and bloodshed. I had drank little, and mounted into the foretop to be out of "harm's way;" and from that I saw the combat, without danger of getting any of the blows which were dealing out so plentifully. The mate came forward to try to quell the disturbance; but they knocked him over a kedge anchor that lay on the deck, and broke one of his ribs.

At length the disturbance died away; and I came down on deck. Some deep drinkers had gathered the bottles which had escaped destruction during the fight, and were emptying their contents. Others were lying insensibly drunk and vomiting. Broken bottles, with their contents promiscuously mixed on the deck with the blood of the combatants, lay scattered about in every direction. I never saw

such a miserable-looking set of wretches, as they appeared next morning. Most of them were "horrified," as they termed it. Almost all of them bore marks of the late fray—black eyes, swelled lips, cut noses, sprained thumbs, &c. &c. As the vessel was to sail that day, the captain, in order to bring them about a little, served them out their grog, and they quickly got to rights again.

We got up our anchors, and set sail with a fair wind. I could not describe the emotions I felt, when I saw the vessel's head turned homewards. I was all joyous anticipation of meeting with my parents. "I will never leave them again," thought I. "I will obey them in every thing, and we will be so happy. I have seen my folly, and I will make a good use of my experience."

Nothing particular occurred on the passage home, until we got near the British coast, when the weather became extremely cold. The look-out aloft was no longer a pleasant birth. I have often been so benumbed when the man came up to relieve me, that I could scarcely move

my limbs to come down upon deck. The weather had been rough for some time; but, one afternoon, it began to blow uncommonly hard. The wind was fair, however, and the captain seemed unwilling to take in sail; but the gale increasing, he ordered the top-gallant-sails to be handed. William and I, with another boy, went up to hand the main top-gallant-sail. The vessel was pitching dreadfully. William went to the weather, and I went to the lee earing to haul in the leach of the sail. The parl which bound the yard to the mast, gave way; and it pitched out with such violence, that William was shook from his hold, and precipitated into the sea. I got a dreadful shock. This was an awful moment. Every pitch that the vessel gave the yard was thrown out from the mast with such force, that it was a miracle I escaped. The other boy had got in on the mast; but it appeared impossible for me to follow him. Nothing could save me, unless the despairing hold that I had; and I could not have kept it long; for every shock rendered me weaker; but

some of the seamen were sent up with a loose line, and succeeded in bracing the yard to the mast, and I was relieved from my perilous situation.

Poor William! I saw him fall. "Oh, God!" he cried, as he fell. I heard no more. The next moment he was swallowed by the waves. They told me he never rose. It was impossible to do any thing to save him, in such weather, with any effect. His fate made a great impression on my mind; for he was my only companion. He was a clever boy, warm-hearted, and kind in his disposition, although he had become quite broken-hearted. Nor did he seem relieved from his melancholy, by the prospect of returning home; for he was sure his father would do nothing to get him free from the ship; and, even if he did, he could feel little pleasure in the anticipation of his usage there. "Oh! James," he would often say, "if I had a father and mother like yours, how happy would I be! but I may truly say that I am an orphan! To be sure, while my mother was living, she was every thing that was good and affectionate

to me! but when she died, I lost the only friend I had in the world; for my father was never kind to me; and, after he married again, I never had a happy minute in the house: and, if I was to go home again, even supposing that he would get me free from the ship, things would be only worse than before. But I am sure I will not live to return. There is a heavy something hangs on my mind, that tells me I will not see the end of this voyage; but I do not feel grieved at it; I rather feel a pleasure in the idea. Then I will be free from ill usage and persecution; and, what makes me almost long for my death, is the hope that I will meet my mother in heaven, never to part from her again.”—I could not forbear weeping when he spoke in this manner; and I tried to cheer him as much as I could, by putting him in mind of our former schemes of happiness and fortune: but he only shook his head, and said, “This is not the world we dreamed it was; but even so, I have no friends—no prospects, and death appears to me to be the only thing that can alter my situation for the

better." Poor fellow! I daresay he little thought it was so near.

The gale still continued to increase, and all our sail was taken in, with the exception of a close-reefed fore top-sail. The wind veered about, and blew a hurricane. Some of the sails were torn in ribbons before they could be handed. The sea ran mountains high. The sky was darkened, and the flapping of the sails and rattling of the blocks made such a noise that we could scarcely hear our own voices. The sea broke over us in such a way, that boats, spars, and camboose were carried off the deck. The helm became almost totally unmanageable; and four men were constantly at it. When a sea struck the vessel, she creaked as if her very sides were coming together. The men were obliged to lash themselves to every place where they could find safety, to prevent their being washed overboard. In this manner we stood in awful suspense, waiting the issue of the storm. The one moment the vessel would rise, perched, as it were, on the verge of a precipice: the next, she would

descend through the awful opening, as if she would strike the very bottom of the sea, while vivid flashes of lightning contributed to throw a horrific glare over the scene.

Three days were we tossed about in this manner, every day expecting it to be our last; for we thought it impossible that the ship could weather the gale. During that time we could not get below; for the hatches were battened down, and we had to subsist on dry biscuit, or eat raw pork with it; for we could get nothing cooked.

On the fourth day, the storm abated; and the weather cleared up; but the vessel rolled so that we expected her masts to go overboard. After the gale we fell in with some vessels which had suffered severely, one in particular had lost all her masts. We were at this time near the mouth of the Channel; and, next day, we made Cape Clear. I could not express what I felt at again seeing the shores of Britain: my imagination was hard at work drawing pictures of the future. We ran up along the Irish coast

with a fair wind, and at last came in sight of the well-known Craig of Ailsa; and, passing it, the Cumbrays and the Cloach light house, we anchored in Greenock roads. I was in transports of joy at the idea of getting home again; but a doubt would often cross my mind, whether my father might feel inclined to get me free from the vessel, after so obstinately persisting in going to sea: I, at least, felt sensible that I did not deserve such indulgence. The day after we arrived, however, my mind was set at ease, for my mother came from Glasgow to see me, and the first words she said, were, "Well, James, are you tired of the sea?"—The tears came into my eyes but I could not speak.—"I find you don't like it," said she, "you have found out, I believe, that your father's description of a sea life was a true one—well, we must try and get you home again." A day or two after, my father came to Greenock; and, having settled matters with the owners, I went home with him on the coach, fully resolved that I would be more wise in future. I had a joyful meeting with my

friends; and, for a time, all went on pleasantly; but my restless disposition still remained the same, and I soon grew tired of home. My parents expected a miraculous change in me; and, when they found that my voyage had made me little wiser, any indiscretion was generally checked with an allusion to my former conduct. This irritated my feelings. Those boys who used to associate with me, now avoided my company: most of them, I believe, by the injunctions of their parents. There were two boys, with whom I had been on the most friendly terms—their parents and mine were very intimate—they were constant playfellows of mine before I went to sea; I had occasionally seen them after my return, without their seeming any way reserved towards me. Some months after I came home, however, I happened to be diverting myself with them in their court yard; we were playing at *hide-and-seek*; I had hid myself in the straw house; I heard their father call them and ask who was with them—when they told him, he said, “Never let me see you in that boy’s

company again, for he ran away from his parents, and he may induce you to do the same.” This went like a dagger to my heart. It humbled me severely in my own eyes. I waited until he went into the house, and then slunk away like a felon. From that day, I thought every one that looked at me was passing similar observations to Mr. H. in their minds. My temper became soured, and I grew melancholy and restless. I brooded continually over the indignity which I conceived I had suffered. “Then,” said I to myself, “I am become an object of contempt to every one. I can never endure this. I will not remain in Glasgow: perhaps it would have been better if my parents had settled me somewhere else for a time.”

One evening, in January, 1809, I had been at home to dinner, and was returning to school, brooding over my real and imaginary evils—my mind in such a state of despondency that I could almost have taken away my life. I determined to leave Glasgow; for I thought, if once out of it, I would be happy. In this state

of mind, walking down the High Street, I met a soldier. The thought struck me instantly that I would enlist, although I rather felt a prejudice against the army. Yet by enlisting I would get out of Glasgow, and to me that was every thing. I followed the soldier, and asked him where his officer lodged. He showed me the place; and I enlisted with the proviso that he would send me out of the town immediately. I was sent to Paisley, and remained with the party there until the recruits were ordered to march for headquarters. When I came into Glasgow to join them, in passing through the Bridge-gate, I met my mother. I had never written to my parents, nor had they heard of me from the time I enlisted. I could scarcely define my feelings. Shame, grief, a sort of sullen despair, a sense that I had cut myself off from the world—that I had done my worst, and a determination to push it to the utmost, were mingled together in my mind. My mother first broke silence. “Poor, infatuated boy!” said she, the tears flowing down her cheeks; “what new calamity have you brought on

yourself by your wild, inconstant disposition?" I told her I had enlisted, and was going that day to join my regiment. "Alas!" said she, "you have now finished it. Now you are lost to us and to yourself; but will you not come home, and see your father before you go?" I hesitated. "Perhaps," said she, "it will be the last time you may ever see him. Come, you had better go with me." I consented, and we went home together. It was near four o'clock. My father generally came home at that hour to dinner. My mother met him as he came in, and explained matters to him. He strove to assume an air of calmness; but his countenance showed the emotions that were working in his mind. We sat down at the table to dinner; but no one seemed inclined to eat. My father cut some meat on his plate; but instantly pushed it from him. He rose from his seat, and walked about the floor with a rapid pace. He opened his waistcoat. He seemed suffocating. I could no longer endure to see the convulsive agony with which his whole frame was agitated. I sunk on my

knees at his feet, and cried out, "Forgive me, O father—forgive me!" He looked at me for a moment; then, bursting into tears, he said, "God forgive you! God forgive you! my poor unfortunate boy. Alas!" said he, "I had none but you. I had formed schemes for your advancement in life. I saw you had some talent, and was determined to spare no expense in making you fit to fill a respectable situation. I had figured to myself you going in and out with me, happy and contented—a credit to yourself and to your parents; but, alas! those hopes are now fled for ever: for the first news I hear of you, may be that your corpse is bleaching on the Continent—a prey to wolves and eagles." Then, as if correcting himself for drawing such a picture— "But your life is in the hands of God. But even now, are you not lost to me? May I not say that I am childless? I give you my forgiveness freely, and also my blessing; and, if you should survive, oh, may you never have a son that will cause you such agony as I feel at this moment. Farewell! my poor boy. I am

afraid I may say, Farewell for ever." With these words he rushed into an adjoining room, and threw himself on his knees, I suppose to pray for that son who had repaid all his kindness with ingratitude and disobedience. My mother was wild with grief. It was the hour at which we were to march. I tore myself out of the house in a state of distraction, and joined the party, who were now on the road to Airdrie. My mind was in such a state of agitation, that I scarcely knew where I was going. I walked on before the party, as if some one was pursuing me, anxious, as it were, to run away from my own feelings.

I am scarcely conscious of what passed between that and Dunbar. It seems like a confused dream. But the parting scene with my father often recurred to my memory; and, although it is now fifteen years since it took place, it remains in it as fresh as yesterday. The step I took at that time has been to me the source of constant and unavailing regret; for it not only destroyed my prospects in life, and fixed me in a situation that I disliked, but

I believe it was the means of breaking the heart of a parent, whose only fault was, that he was too indulgent. I felt sensible of his tenderness, and I am sure I loved him. But mine was a wayward fate. Hurried on by impulse, I generally acted contrary to the dictates of my own judgement—"my argument right, but my life in the wrong."

He has long gone to his eternal rest; but, while he lived, he was a man—take him for all in all—whose equal would be difficult to find; for it could truly be said of him, that "even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

CHAPTER VII.

HEAD-QUARTERS—PAY OFF—DRILL—TREAT TO
THE SERGEANTS—DENNIS—HIS CHARACTER—
A SPONGE—HIS TREATMENT—BUILDING AIRY
CASTLES AGAIN—CHARACTER OF MY COM-
RADES—OBSERVATIONS.

WHEN our party arrived in Dunbar, where the regiment lay, after being finally approved, and the balance of my bounty paid me, which was about four guineas (after deducting necessaries), I was conducted by the sergeant to the room where my birth was appointed. When he left me, I sat down on a form, melancholy enough. An old soldier sat down beside me; and, remarking that I looked dull, asked me where I came from, when I replied, "Glasgow." I was immediately claimed as a townsman by some of the knowing ones, one of whom had the Irish brogue in perfection, and another the distinguishing dialect and accent of a cock.

ney. "You don't speak like natives of Glasgow," said I. "Och ! stop until you be as long from home as me," said Paddy, giving a wink to his comrades, "and you will forget both your mother-tongue and the mother that bore you." "Ha' you got yere boonty yet, laddie?" said an Aberdeen man. "Yes," said I. "Than you'll no want for frien's as lang as it lasts." So I found; for every little attention was paid me that they could devise. One brushed my shoes, another my coat; and nothing could equal the many professions of good-will and offers of service I received. There was a competition amongst them who should be my comrade, each supporting his offer by what service he would render me, such as cleaning my accoutrements; teaching me my exercise, &c. It appeared to me that I was set up at auction to be knocked down to the highest bidder. But I paid little attention to them. My mind was taken up, thinking of my folly, and ruminating on its consequences.

After holding a private consultation amongst themselves, one of them took me

aside, and told me it was the usual custom for each recruit, when he joined the company, to give the men of the room he belonged to a "treat." "How much?" said I, putting my hand in my pocket; for, in the passive state of mind I was then in, they would have found little difficulty in persuading me to give them all I had.— "A guinea" was the reply. "Why didn't you ask two?" said an old fellow aside to the spokesman (when he saw me give the one so freely). He seemed vexed that he had not.

It was then proposed to go into the town, to purchase the liquor; and I, of course, must go along with them. Four or five accompanied me to town, and we met two or three more as if by accident. As we returned home, they lingered behind me a little, and appeared to be consulting about something. When they came up to me, one of them said, as I had been so free in giving my treat, they could not do less than treat me; and led the way into a public-house for that purpose. One half pint of whiskey was called in after another, all protesting that they

would be their share ; but, when the ~~re-~~ homing came to be paid, which amounted to seven or eight shillings, each asked his neighbour to lend him until he went up to the barracks. It turned out, however, that none of them had any money ; and it ended in a proposal that I should pay the whole, and they would repay me on pay-day. This opened my eyes a little. I thought I could see a great deal of meanness and trick in their conduct ; but I took no notice of it.

When night came, the room was cleared, and the forms ranged around. An old Highlander in the room had a pair of bagpipes, which with two fifes constituted our music. When all were assembled, the drinking commenced, handing it round from one to another. After a round or two, old Donald's pipes were called for, and the men commenced dancing with the women of the company. The stamping, hallooing and snapping of fingers which ensued, intermingled with the droning sound of the bagpipes, was completely deafening. In the ~~ext~~ confusion some of the thirsty souls took the

opportunity to help themselves out of their turn, which, being observed, caused a dispute; and, the liquor being expended, a join of a shilling a man was proposed to "carry on the glory." I was again applied to for my shilling; and, aided by this fresh supply, they kept up "the spree" until one o'clock in the morning. When some of them who had got drunk began to fight, the lights were knocked out, and pokers, tongs, tin dishes, &c. were flying about in every direction. At last, the affair ended by the officer of the guard sending some of them to the guard-house, and ordering the others to bed.

Next morning I was besieged, before six o'clock, by a band of the fellows, who had got drunk the night before, begging me to treat them to a glass to "heal their head." I felt little inclined to drink at that hour, and expressed myself to that effect. They then asked me to lend them money to procure it, and they would repay me on pay-day. I gave them what they wanted, and I soon had the most of the men in the room at me on the same

errand. In the course of the day I got my regimentals served out, and was sent to drill. After drill it was intimated to the recruits who had lately joined, that they ought to treat the drill sergeant, as he would not be so hard on us if we did so. While we were talking, the sergeant who had conducted us to the regiment came up to bid us farewell. "You are not going away to night," said a recruit. "I believe I will," said the sergeant. "unless you have anything to treat me to." "You ought to give the sergeant a supper," said a man who had joined about a month before. "We gave our commanding sergeant a supper." It was therefore agreed that we could be no worse than the others, and he was accordingly invited along with our drill sergeant. When night came, and we were going into town, it was moved that the sergeants of our companies ought to be invited also; and of course it was insinuated that we would be no losers by so doing. When we were all met, between sergeants of companies and their friends, whom they had taken

the liberty to invite, we were a goodly company. The supper came in, and was done great justice to by the guests. Next came the drink, and, when all hearts were warmed by the rum punch, numerous were the protestations of friendship and promises of favour from the sergeants to the recruits. I was sitting next our conducting sergeant: he seemed very restless, and spoke often to a very loquacious sergeant who sat near him, who replied several times that it was too soon yet. At last, however, when he found we were all pretty mellow, he rose and commenced his harangue with "I say, lads, I dare say you are all very well pleased with Sergeant A----". This was assented to by all the recruits. "Well," said he, "I just wished to inform you that it is the usual custom for the recruits to give the sergeant, who conducts them, a present when they receive their bounty." The acquiescence of all present, showed how well the sergeant had chosen his time to make the proposition. "What is the usual sum?" said one. This

question was put to our conducting sergeant: and, after some hesitation, he very modestly replied, " five shillings each". The money was soon collected, and he pocketed it with great glee.

During the entertainment, our friends the sergeants obliged us extremely, by calling for every thing they wanted; and some of them laid in a store of tobacco, that night, that served them for weeks after. At a late hour, we separated, and got home to our barrack rooms, without disturbance, having previously had leave from tattoo. Next day, I was roused for drill at day light; and, after coming in, wishing to procure some breakfast, was surprised to find my cash dwindled to a very few shillings. During the days I was applied to by some of my comrades for the loan of more money; but I refused, alleging that I had little left. I could soon see that this information had a great impression on them; for the things which they had formerly been so anxious in doing for me were now left to be done by myself; and, amongst all those who had been so anxious to become my com-

rades, I could not find one now that would accept of me. A new party of recruits joined, and I was soon altogether forgotten.

Next day, having purchased some little things that I needed, I found my money expended; but I gave myself little uneasiness about it, as I had lent so much, and the following day was pay-day. When the men received their pay, I spoke to those who had borrowed the money from me, and said that I would be obliged to them for it; but how was I surprised when some of them swore I had never lent them a farthing, and threatened to beat me for presuming to say so! Others said they could not pay me at that time, and more of them laughed at my simplicity in expecting repayment of any money borrowed out of a bounty! This is strange justice thought I; and, leaving the room, I wandered down by the sea-side, thinking on the honest men that I had met amongst. I heard the step of some one behind me, and, turning round to see who it was, I perceived one of the recruits who had joined sometime before

me. His name was Denis ——— : he was an Irishman. I had remarked that he took no part with the others, in their professions of kindness to me, and that on the night of the treat he had gone to bed without joining in it. When he came up to me, he said "I have waited until now to speak to you, for I would not say a word while the bounty lasted, lest you should have suspected. I was like the others ; but now I have come to say that if you choose you can be my comrade, for mine left me before you came to the room, to go along with a recruit, and now, that his bounty is finished, he wishes to come back again ; but I hate such meanness, and would never associate with a fellow of his description ; however, I think you and I will agree." I was glad to accept his disinterested offer ; and, for all the time Dennis and I were comrades, I never had reason to repent it ; for he was of a warm-hearted generous disposition, and never flinched from me in distress. He had no education ; he could neither read nor write ; but he had a most vigorous natural judgement, which no sophistry

as colouring could blind, and his acuter Hibernian remarks often put men who valued themselves on their education to the blush ; besides this, he had a fund of humour that never would allow him to stoop to a mean action. One fault indeed he had, in common with the generality of his countrymen, and that was, when he got drank he was a thorough madman now. After this, Dennis and I were left to ourselves, to act as we pleased, and the "knowing boys" looked out for newer kinds to fleece, some of whom descended to very mean stratagems to get drunk. I remember being in the town with Dennis the evening, and, having gone into a public house to get a glass, before we went home, one of these disgraceful animals came into the room where we were sitting, and, after telling some rascally story, without being asked to drink, he lifted the glass from before us, and, having drank to our good health, swallowed its contents. I was confounded at his impudence, and sat staring at him, but Dennis was up in an instant, and knocked him down, and unmercifully

himself, "kicked him for falling?" "The fellow never made any resistance, but, gathering himself up, crawled out of the room. When he was gone,—" "By my faith," said Dennis, "I think I gave the rascal the worth of his money—that is the only cure for a 'sponge!'" "I wonder they have no shame!" said he. "Shame!" rejoined Dennis, "troth, shame and they could be married, for any relationship between them!!"

In a short time I began to recover my spirits, and when I had any spare time, I had recourse to my old favourites, which I obtained from a circulating library in town. It is true I could not now dream so delectably of the life of a shepherd or a sailor; but I had the field of honour before me. To fight in defence of one's country, thought I—to follow the example of a Bruce or a Wallace—must be a glorious thing. Military fame seemed the only object worth living for. I already anticipated my acts of valour, charging the enemy, driving all before me, and coming back loaded with honour and a stand of French colours, receiving

the praise of my commanding officer and a commission. On I went in my cascade of arms, and it was impossible to stop short of being a general. In these day-dreams of promotion and honour, I did not look particularly to the situation I was then in; nor even very attentively at the intermediate ground of bad to go over; but these were trifles in my estimation at that time. I must confess, however, that a damp was often thrown over these fine speculations by some harsh words from the drill sergeant, or some overbearing conduct of my superiors. Or when I saw a poor fellow taken out and receiving four or five hundred lashes, for being ten minutes late from tattoo, I could not help thinking that the road to preferment was none of the smoothest. Be that as it may, I believe I had by this time caught a portion of military enthusiasm; and "death or glory" seemed very fine words; and often, when walking alone, have I ranted over the words which Goldsmith puts into the mouth of the Vicar of Wakefield, when his son leaves him to go into the army.—"If God

my boy; and, if you fall, though distant, exposed, and unwept by those who love you, the most precious tears are those with which heaven bedews the unburied head of the soldier."

The miserable retreat of our army to Corunna, and the account given of it by some of those who had returned, often lowered my too sanguine anticipations; but nothing could permanently keep down my ever active imagination. In this state of mind, I felt a relief from the melancholy I had previously sunk into; but still I was far from being contented; something was continually occurring which made me draw comparisons between my present way of living and that which I had enjoyed at home. There were few of those with whom I could associate that had an idea beyond the situation they were in; those who had were afraid to show they possessed any more knowledge than their comrades, for fear of being laughed at by fellows that, in other circumstances, they would have despised. If a man ventured to speak in a style more refined than the herd around him, he was told that "Every

one did not read the dictionary like him?" for "dinna be given us ony o' your grammar words na." If a man, when accused by superiors of something of which he was not guilty, ventured to speak in his own defence, he was called a *lawyer*; and if he desired to give no reply. If he said that he thought it was hard that he should be condemned without a hearing, the answer was, "D——n you, sir, *you have no right to think*: there are people paid for thinking for you—do what you are ordered, sir, right or wrong." If he did not join with his neighbours in their ribald obscenity and nonsense, he was a methodist—if he did not curse and swear, he was a quaker—and if he did not drink the most of his pay, he was called a miser, a d——d mean scrub, and the generality of his comrades would join in execrating him. In such society it was a hard matter for a man of any superior information or intellect to keep his ground; for he had no *means* to converse with on those subjects which were most congenial to his mind, and to try to inform his comrades was a

vain, and, by them considered, a presumptuous attempt. Thus, many men of ability and information were, I may say, forced from the intellectual height which they had attained, down to the level of those with whom they were obliged to associate; and every thing conspired to sink them to that point where they became best fitted for *tractable beasts of burthen*.

Blackguardism bore the sway, and gave the tone to the whole. Even the youngest were led into scenes of low debauchery and drunkenness, by men advanced in years. All therefore, with few exceptions, were drawn into this overwhelming vortex of abject slavishness and dissipation. Many of the officers, who at least *ought* to have been men of superior talents and education, seemed to be little better, if we were allowed to judge from the abominable oaths and scurrility which they used to those under their command, and the vexatious and overbearing tyranny of their conduct, which was eagerly imitated by those beneath them, even to the lance corporal with his *single chevron*. All this considered (and

I have not exaggerated)—it must be certainly concluded that, if there is one method better than another, to make a man an abject slave to the will of his superiors, without a conscience or a judgement of his own, one calculated to smother every generous and noble feeling, to destroy his morals and his constitution, there could not have been a better school chosen than the army, in the state it was in at that time.

It redounds much to the honour of those who superintend the discipline of the army at present, that the situation of the soldier has been much ameliorated since that period; but still I am afraid (in spite of all that has been proved to the contrary) that many consider the soldier's ignorance the best guarantee for his subordination.

Let it not be thought, however, that there were not many exceptions to this general character which I have drawn (some of whom I will have occasion to mention in this narrative), who have shed a lustre around the military character that has often served to conceal some of the darker parts of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARCH TO ABERDEEN—INFATUATED DRINKERS—THEIR ASSOCIATES—THEIR CONDUCT TRACED TO ITS CAUSE—OBSERVATIONS—REMEDY—VOYAGE—JERSEY—JUBILEE—DENNIS AND A FRENCH PUBLICAN—GUARD HOUSE—OFFICERS.

ABOUT the beginning of May, we got the route for Aberdeen. On the march, I have nothing interesting to take notice of, unless the kindness which we experienced from the people, where we were billeted on the road, particularly after we crossed the Frith of Forth.

We arrived in Aberdeen, after a march of ten days, where we had better barracks and cheaper provisions than in Dunbar; but, the barracks being too small, a number of our men were billeted in the town, and not being in the mess, when pay-day came, it was a common thing for many of them to spend what they had to support

them in drink; and some of them were so infatuated as to sell even their allowance of bread, for the same purpose. They were then obliged (to use their own phraseology) to "Box Harry," or "Live on the smell of their oil rag" until the next pay-day; and some of them carried this system to such a length that it was found necessary to bring them into barracks, to prevent them from starving themselves.

Indeed, to speak from any experience that I have had, the men's morals are no way improved by being lodged out of barracks; for while here, the principal employment of many of them when off duty was drinking, and associating with common women; and I think, if any thing tends to depreciate the character of the soldier in the eyes of his countrymen in civil life more than another, it is this habit of associating publicly with such characters. This total disregard of even the appearance of decency conveys an idea to the mind that he must be the *lowest of the low*. But many of them seem to be proud of such company; and

it is quite a common thing to meet them on the streets arm in arm, or the soldier's arm about the neck of his *dearie*.

This debasement of feeling and character, I imagine arises from two causes: First, the system of discipline pursued by many commanding officers, which teaches the soldier to believe that he is a mere piece of machinery in the hands of his superiors, to be moved only as they please; without any accordance of his own reason or judgement, and that he has no merit in his own actions, independent of this moving power. Such a belief naturally has the effect of making a man so little in his own eyes that he feels he cannot sink lower, let him keep what company he may: The Second, from that immorality which seems so fashionable in the army, both amongst officers and men.

I hate all canting; but is it not evident to every one who knows any thing of the army, that in this I state only the truth? Does it not even seem contagious; for, in general the moment a recruit is inlisted, and gets a forage cap on his head and a stick in his hand, he considers himself

licenced to drink, curse and swear, and associate with women of the town, whatever may have been his previous character? There is no necessity for this. If the character of the army has fallen, the fault is not in the profession itself; but in the conduct of the individuals composing it.

But let soldiers be taught that they have a character to uphold; give them to understand that they are made of the same materials as those who command them; capable of feeling sentiments of generosity and honour—let officers evince by their conduct that they believe that the men they command have feelings as well as themselves (although it would be a hard task to make some of them think so); let them be encouraged to improve their minds—and there will soon be a change for the better in the army—one honourable to all concerned.

The doctrine which teaches that men are most easily governed when ignorant is, I believe, now nearly exploded; and I can say from my own experience, and also safely appeal to all unprejudiced individ-

uals of the army, whether they have not found those men who have had their minds improved, the best soldiers: and this will hold good even when they are in a state of intoxication; for, while the one is like a wild beast let loose, the other still retains a portion of that decorum which always characterizes a sober man.

I hope I will be pardoned for this digression, as the observations here offered are the fruit of fifteen years experience of the service, and as such, I think, are worthy attention. To return to my narrative.

We had been about three months in Aberdeen, when we received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to sail for Jersey; and, four transports having arrived for us, we prepared to embark.

This was a busy scene. We had been on good terms with the towns-people, and many of them attended us to the pier. As we marched down, the old women stood in rows exclaiming—"Peer things, they are gan awa to the slaughter." While the boys were ranked up, marching before our band, with as much import-

ance as if they considered themselves heroes; and no doubt, the fine music, and the sight of the soldiers marching to it, gave them high ideas of a military life; and perhaps was the incipient cause of their enlisting at a future period. Indeed I must confess that when I heard the crowd cheering, and our music playing before us, I felt at least a foot higher, and strutted with as much dignity as if I had been a general. I almost felt proud at that moment that I was a soldier.

Once we had embarked, however, and fairly out to sea, my ideas were soon low enough. Stowed like any other part of a cargo, with only eighteen inches allowed for each man to lie on, we had scarcely room to move. The most of the men became sea-sick, and it was almost impossible to be below without becoming so. The women particularly suffered much: they were crammed in, indiscriminately amongst the men, and no arrangement made for their comfort.

No incident of any consequence took place on this voyage, with the exception of a severe gale of wind, which forced us

to run into Dungeness. It soon abated however, and we proceeded on our voyage. We made the island of Jersey, and disembarked at St. Oban's harbour: from that we marched through St. Helier's, to the Russian barracks near Groville. .

All kinds of liquor, tea, sugar and fruit were here uncommonly cheap; but bread was dear, and what we had served out as rations was quite black and soft, something in consistence like a lump of clay. Brandy was only a shilling a bottle; wine two shillings; cyder three halfpence a quart; and tobacco fifteenpence a pound.

The jovial drinking fellows amongst us thought this another paradise—a heaven on earth—and many of them laid the foundation of complaints here which they never got rid of.

It was during the time we were here that the jubilee (on his late Majesty's entering the 50th year of his reign) was celebrated. We were marched to the sands between St. Helier's and St. Oban's, where the whole of the military on the island were assembled. We were served out with eighteen rounds of blank cart-

ridge per man, and the *feu-de-joie* was fired from right to left, and again taken up by the right, thus keeping up a constant fire until it was all expended. The artillery, with the various batteries, and shipping in the harbour, joined in the firing; and altogether formed an imposing scene.

As we returned home, Dennis took the opportunity of asking me what I thought of the *fête*, which we had been assisting at. "I don't know," said I, "I think it was very grand." "Faith and conscience, that's what it was; but what use was in it, unless frightening the sea maws? I wish that I had all the money that was spint in gun pouther this blessed day of our Lord." "Why, Dennis," said I, "what would you do with it?"—"Troth, and it's myself that knows: there's many a poor naked chil running about the cabin doors in Ireland. Aye, in troth, and many fathers and mothers too, as well as childer, that have sorrow much to put on, or eat either. Och, it's I that would make a jubilee of it for the craturs—one that wouldn't blow away in smoke."

When we arrived at our barracks, we got a day's pay in advance, and with great injunctions not to get drunk and riotous—we were allowed to go and make ourselves merry until tattoo-beating. Dennis and I resolved to hold the occasion like the others, although he said he did not admire this way of "treating us to our own." He thought the King that threw away so much money in gun-powder, might at least have given us an extra day's pay.

We went to one of the usual drinking houses; but it was full, up to the door, volumes of tobacco smoke issued from every opening; and the noise of cursing, swearing and singing was completely deafening.

We were obliged to go farther off to get a house to sit down in. At last we found a place of that description, and went in. After a glass or two, we became quite jovial; and Dennis insisted that our host and his wife should sit down along with us—he was a Frenchman, and spoke little English; but Dennis did not mind that, and there soon commenced a most barbarous jargon—Dennis laying off a

long story, of which, I am sure, the poor man did not understand a syllable. Yet he went on, still saying, at the end of every sentence, " You take me now?"— " You persave now, don't you?" While our host, whose patience seemed pretty well taxed, would shrug up his shoulders with a smile, and looking at his wife, who seemed to understand what was said nearly as well as himself, he would give a nod and say, " Oui, monsieur—yees, zare—yees, zare."

Dennis got tired of this, and asked the landlord if he could sing.—This completely puzzled the Frenchman. At last, after every method had been tried in vain to make him comprehend, Dennis said, " You do this," and, opening his mouth, he howled out a line of an Irish drinking song. The Frenchman, seemingly frightened with the noise that Dennis had made, started to his feet and exclaimed, " me no chanter, me no zing." " Och, the devil's-in ye, for a liar." " Parly-vu." " But, sorrow matter, I'll give you a song —a true Irish song, my jewel," and he commenced with the " sprig of shillelah and

shamrock so green." He had got as far as "an Irishman all in his glory was there," quivering and spinning out the last line of the verse to a prodigious length, when a rap came to the door, and the voice of the sergeant of the picquet, asking if there were any soldiers in the house, put an unpleasant end to his melody. Previous to this, however, Dennis had taken up a spade handle, to personify the shillelah, and it was with difficulty that I prevented him from bringing it down on the sergeant's head.

We were then escorted to the guard-house, for being out after tattoo, which we found so full that we could scarcely get admittance. Dennis cried, and sung, and cursed, and swore, by turns, until he fell fast asleep. I was so stupefied by the drink I had taken, that I scarcely knew how I felt. Next morning, however, we were released along with all the others who had been confined the preceding evening.

About this time two of our officers left us in consequence, I believe, of fighting a duel. The one was a very good officer;

but the other was a most egregious puppy, who had scarcely a good quality to recommend him. When he was not drinking, or laying plans to debauch the men's wives, he used to go cracking a long whip about the barrack square. He had a tolerable person; but his head had evidently been designed for a clown; his face expressed nothing but vulgar black-guardism, *and it told no lies*. He had the true Irish definition of an open countenance. I believe there were few very sorry at his leaving the regiment.

I am not sure whether it was in place of him that we got an ensign (by purchase*); but such an ensign!—He had not brain enough to bait a mouse trap, so clownish, so awkward, and so stupid; and so he remained, and got promoted in his turn; but I must do him the justice to say that he was (what some others equally stupid were not) *harmless*.

* A method by which many a numskull acquires a rank in the service, and of course a right to tyrannize over men far superior to himself,—when, if he was left to his own merit, he would never rise even to the humble station of corporal of the pioneers.

CHAPTER IX.

PREPARE TO EMBARK FOR PORTUGAL—THE WOMEN DRAW LOTS—SANDY AND HIS WIFE—MARCH TO ST. OBAN'S AND EMBARK—PARTING OF THE MEN WITH THEIR WIVES—A DISTRESSING SCENE—VOYAGE—MAKE THE TAGUS—PORTUGUESE PILOT—DISEMBARK—LISBON.

We had been about three months in Jersey, when the order came for our embarkation for Portugal; but only six women to every hundred men were allowed to accompany us. As there were, however, a great many more than that number, it was ordered that they should draw lots, to see who should remain. The women of the company to which I belonged were assembled in the pay-sergeant's room for that purpose. The men of the company had gathered round them, to see the result, with various degrees of interest depicted in their countenances. The proportion-

ate number of tickets were made with "to go" or "not to go" written on them. They were then placed in a hat, and the women were called by their seniority to draw their tickets. I looked round me before they began. It was an interesting scene.—The sergeant stood in the middle with the hat in his hand, the women around him, with their hearts palpitating, and anxiety and suspense in every countenance. Here and there you would see the head of a married man pushed forward, from amongst the crowd, in the attitude of intense anxiety and attention.

The first woman called, was the sergeant's wife—she drew "not to go." It seemed to give little concern to any one, but herself and her husband. She was not very well liked in the company. The next was, a corporal's wife—she drew "to go." This was received by all with nearly as much apathy as the first. She was little beloved either.

The next was an old hand, a most outrageous virago, who thought nothing giving her husband a knock down when he offended her, and who used to make great disturbance about the fire in t

cooking way. Every one uttered their wishes audibly that she would lose; and her husband, if we could judge from his countenance, seemed to wish so to. She boldly plunged her hand into the hat, and drew out a ticket: on opening it, she held it up triumphantly, and displayed "To go." "D—n you," said she, "old Meg will go yet, and live to scald more of you about the fireside," A general murmur of disappointment ran through the whole. "D—n the old b—h," said some of them, "she has the devil's luck and her own."

The next in turn was the wife of a young man, who was much respected in the company for his steadiness and good behaviour. She was remarkable for her affection for her husband, and beloved by the whole company for her modest and obliging disposition. She advanced, with a palpitating heart and trembling hand, to decide on (what was to her, I believe) her future happiness or misery. Every one prayed for her success. Trembling between fear and hope she drew out one of the tickets, and attempted to open it; but her hand shook so that she could not

do it. She handed it to one of the men to open.—When he opened it, his countenance fell, and he hesitated to say what it was. She cried out to him, in a tone of agony, “Tell me, for God’s sake, what it is.” “Not to go,” said he, in a compassionate tone of voice.—“Oh, God, help me! oh, Sandy!” she exclaimed, and sunk lifeless in the arms of her husband, who had sprung forward to her assistance, and in whose face was now depicted every variety of wretchedness. The drawing was interrupted, and she was carried by her husband to his birth, where he hung over her in frantic agony. By the assistance of those around her, she was soon recovered from her swoon; but she awoke only to a sense of her misery. The first thing she did was to look round for her husband, when she perceived him she seized his hand, and held it, as if she was afraid that he was going to leave her. “Oh, Sandy, you’ll no leave me and your poor babie, will you?” The poor fellow looked in her face with a look of agony and despair.

The scene drew tears from every eye

in the room, with the exception of the termagant whom I have already mentioned, who said, "What are ye a' makin' sic a wark about? let the babie get her greet out. I suppose she thinks there's nae body ever parted with their men but her. Wi' her faintin', and her airs, and her wark." "Oh, you're an oul hard-hearted devil," said Dennis, "an unfeeling oul hag, and the devil 'ill never get his due till he gets you;"—and he took her by the shoulders and pushed her out of the room. She would have turned on Dennis; but she had got a squeeze from him on a former occasion, and I daresay she did not like to run the risk of another.

The drawing was again commenced, and various were the expressions of feelings evinced by those concerned. The Irish women, in particular, were loud in their grief. It always appeared to me that the Irish either feel more acutely than the Scotch or English, or that they have less restraint on themselves in expressing it. The barrack, through the rest of that day, was one continued scene of lamentation.

I was particularly interested in the fate of Sandy and his wife. I wished to administer consolation; but what could I say? There was no comfort that I could give, unless leading her to hope that we would soon return. "Oh, no," said she "when we part here, I am sure, that we'll never meet again in this world!"

We were to march the next morning early. The most of the single men were away drinking. I slept in the birth above Sandy and his wife. They never went to bed, but sat the whole night in their birth, with their only child between them, alternately embracing their child and each other, and lamenting their cruel fortune. I never witnessed in my life such a heart-rending scene. The poor fellow tried to assume some firmness; but in vain: some feeling expression from her would throw him off his guard, and at last his grief became quite uncontrollable.

When the first bugle sounded, he got up, and prepared his things. Here a new source of grief sprung up. In laying aside the articles which he intended to leave, and which they had used together,

the idea seemed fixed in her mind, that they would never use them in that way again ; and as she put them aside, she watered them with her tears. Her tea pot, her cups, and every thing that they had used in common—all had their apostrophe of sorrow. He tried to persuade her to remain in the barrack, as we had six miles to travel to the place of embarkation ; but she said she would take the last minute in his company that she could.

The regiment fell in, and marched off, amid the wailing of those who, having two or three children, could not accompany us to the place of embarkation. Many of the men had got so much intoxicated that they were scarcely able to walk. The commanding officer was so displeased at their conduct that, in coming through St. Helier's, he would not allow the band to play.

When we arrived at the place where we were to embark, a most distressing scene took place, in the men parting with their wives. Some of them indeed it did not appear to affect much : others had

got themselves nearly tipsy; but the most of them seemed to feel acutely. When Sandy's wife came to take her last farewell, she lost all government of her grief. She clung to him with a despairing hold. "Oh, dinna, dinna leave me!" she cried. The vessel was hauling out. One of the sergeants came to tell her that she would have to go ashore, "Oh, they'll never be so hard-hearted as to part us," said she; and, running aft to the quarter deck, where the commanding officer was standing, she sunk down on her knees, with her child in her arms. "Oh, will you no let me gang wi' my husband? Will ye tear him frae his wife and his wean? He has nae frien's but us—nor we ony but him—and, oh, will you mak' us a' frien'less? See my wee babie pleadin' for us."

The officer felt a painful struggle between his duty and his feelings: the tears came into his eyes. She eagerly caught at this as favourable to her cause. "Oh, aye, I see you have a feeling heart—you'll let me gang wi' him. You have nae wife: but, if you had, I am sure you

wad think it unco hard to be torn frae her this way—and this wee darlin'.” “My good woman,” said the officer, “I feel for you much; but my orders are peremptory, that no more than six women to each hundred men go with their husbands. You have had your chance as well as the other women; and, although it is hard enough on you to be separated from your husband, yet there are many more in the same predicament; and it is totally out of my power to help it.” “Well, well,” said she, rising from her knees, and straining her infant to her breast: “It’s a’ owre wi’ us, my puir babie; this day leaves us friendless on the wide world.” “God will be your friend,” said I, as I took the child from her until she would get into the boat. Sandy had stood, like a person bewildered all this time, without saying a word. “Farewell then, a last farewell then,” said she to him: “Where’s my babie,” she cried, I handed him to her—“Give him a last kiss, Sandy.” He pressed the infant to his bosom in silent agony. “Now, a’s owre; farewell, Sandy! we’ll maybe meet

in heaven :" and she stepped into the boat with a wild despairing look. The vessel was now turning the pier, and she was almost out of our sight in an instant; but, as we got the last glimpse of her, she uttered a shriek, the knell of a broken heart, which rings in my ears at this moment. Sandy rushed down below, and threw himself into one of the births, in a state of feeling which defies description. Poor fellow, his wife's forebodings were too true! He was amongst the first that was killed in Portugal! What became of her, I have never been able to learn.

Nothing occurred worthy of remark on our voyage from Jersey to Lisbon. When we made the mouth of the Tagus, we got on board a Portuguese pilot. He had scarcely reached the gangway when he was surrounded by all the men on the deck; for his appearance was grotesque in the extreme. He was about four feet and a half high, and had on a jacket and breeches of what would have puzzled a philosopher to tell the original; for patches of red, yellow, blue, &c. were mingled through the whole dress, without any

regularity. A pair of red stockings, and an enormous cocked hat, completed his costume. His complexion was of the same hue as a well-smoked bacon ham; and the whole contour of his face bore a striking resemblance to the ape tribe. "Blessings on your purty face, my honey," said Dennis, as he eyed him narrowly, "You have made your escape from some showman. Devil burn me, if I don't think I have seen you tumbling on a rope at Donnybrook fair." Our hero passed on (taking no notice of the compliment Dennis had paid him), to take the helm from the seaman on duty; but the tar, giving him a contemptuous look, called out to the captain, "Will I give the helm to this here *thing*?" "Certainly," said the captain, laughing. The sailor, however, did not seem sure about him; and, as he passed on to the forecastle could not help throwing a doubtful look behind, at his *substitute*. He proved to be a good pilot, however, and managed the vessel well.

We passed Fort St. Julian, and sailed up the Tagus as far as Belem, where

our pilot gave the order to “le go de ank.” The attention of those on deck was soon drawn towards a number of people who were sitting in a row, beneath the walls of a large building, seemingly very busy at something. After watching their motions for some time, we discovered that they were picking the vermin off themselves! There was none of that *modest pressing* between the finger and thumb, for fear of being seen, which we may observe in our dirty and indigent neighbours at home. It was absolute open murder! in all its varieties; and truly they had their hands full of work; for, although we looked at them for a length of time, the carnage still continued as fierce as ever. It appeared to me that a new breed sprung, Phœnix-like, from the remains of their predecessors. This is a *biting* sample of Portugal, thought I, turning away in disgust from the scene; but I soon got accustomed to it; for in Spain and Portugal, the latter particularly, the louse seems quite at home, not confined to the poor alone; for I have seen the family of a rich fidalgo, male

and female, assembled on the sunny side of the house "lousing themselves" publicly, without seeming to feel any shame. So far from that, it appeared to be the most interesting of their forenoon amusements.

Next morning we disembarked and marched up to St. Domingo convent, part of which had been converted into barracks. In the course of the day Dennis and I got into the town. We promised ourselves much from the view we had had from the river the preceding evening; but were miserably disappointed when we got into the streets; for mountains of filth were collected in them, so that we could scarcely pass; and the smell of oil and garlic issuing from the shops was quite sickening. The most of the streets were very narrow.

The population seemed composed of monks and friars, for we met them at every step either begging, or walking in procession with the sacrament (or host) to some sick person. On these occasions they were preceded by a bell, which warned the passengers of their approach; whenever it was heard, they were down

on their knees in a moment, in the very middle of the mud, and continued praying and beating their breasts until it passed. Poor Dennis was sadly puzzled the first time he met one of these parties; he was a catholic, and of course could not avoid following the example of the *christianos* around him; but he had a great aversion to kneeling in the dirty streets. The procession was fast advancing, and he had been two or three times half down on his knees and up again; at last, a lucky thought struck him—he snatched the hat out of the hand of a Portuguese that was kneeling before him, and, deliberately placing it on the ground, kneeled down on it, and went through the ceremony with great gravity—thus saving both his conscience and his breeches. The fellow who owned the hat durst not move until the procession had passed; and then, without giving him time to speak, Dennis clapped the hat, dirty as it was, on the owner's head, and walked off. I could not forbear laughing at the scene, and I daresay the holy fathers did not think much of my sanctity.

The fruit market was opposite to the convent gate; and it certainly was to us a novel and a pleasing sight. The finest fruits, which at home were rare and high in price, we found here as plenty and as cheap as gooseberries. Pine apples, peaches and grapes of the largest size and most exquisite flavour, with oranges, lemons and pomegranates, were arranged on the standings, in the most tempting and tasteful manner. Dennis and I walked through amongst them with our mouths watering, yet fearful that our finances would not enable us to buy any. I ventured, however, to ask for the worth of a vintin (about three halfpence English) of oranges; after giving the woman the money and pointing to the fruit, I held out my hand to receive them, but she beckoned me to give her my hat, and, to our surprise, she nearly filled it.

The fragrant and delicious odour which perfumed the market place, and the sight of the beautiful fruit and flowers, made it a much more attractive place of resort, than the dirty streets filled with the stench of oil and garlic. My opinion of the

interior of Lisbon was certainly very low ; and, I think, if a stranger wishes to see Lisbon, and leave it with any ideas of its grandeur, he ought to contemplate it from the river, but never set his foot on shore, for he will then feel nothing but disgust.

To the convent, in which we were lodged, was attached a nunnery ; and, through its latticed windows, we often saw the nuns peeping, while we were on parade. They did not seem to be so rigidly kept in as they are reported to be. I remember seeing a new-born child exposed, naked and dead, on the leads beneath their windows : how it came there I cannot pretend to say, but there it was ; and our men were *charitable* enough to believe that it belonged to some of themselves.

While here, we had no want of chaunting prayers, and incense in our vicinity. The incense they burnt had a peculiar smell. I have often heard of the association of sound with ideas, but I think the association of smell with ideas deserves as much attention ; for, to this day, if I meet with any thing like the perfume of their

incense, I am immediately transported, in idea, to the chapel of the convent of St. Domingo. Its high-arched gothic windows, and all the paraphernalia of its interior—images of saints, splendid altars, gigantic wax candles, and friars chaunting the service, intermingled with the deep tones of the organ—all float across my memory as fresh as yesterday.

CHAPTER X.

EMBARK FOR CADIZ—LANDING—RECEPTION—
CADIZ—MANNER OF INTERMENT—FORT M—
—OPERATIONS—OFFICERS—GALE—VESSELS
STRANDED ON THE FRENCH SIDE OF THE BAY—
PRIZES—JOHN —— —COURT MARTIAL—RE-
SULT.

WE remained only seven days in Lisbon: on the evening of the seventh we were turned out, marched down to Belem and embarked by torch light, for Cadiz. I do not remember anything worthy of notice, which took place on this voyage, only that it was tedious.

When we made the Bay of Cadiz, we found a large fleet of British vessels there before us. The French had possession of all the surrounding country, with the exception of the Isle of Leon and Cadiz: and these were closely besieged. When we first arrived, we were not sure on which side of the bay we would be re-

quired to land; but, we were served out with flints and ammunition, and our commanding officer issued a circular to the men on board the different transports, ordering us to hold ourselves in readiness for immediate action, and exhorting us to remember the honour of our country and regiment.

That evening, our light company, with those of the other regiments, forming a light brigade, under the command of Lieutenant-General William Stewart, landed and marched to the out-posts at the town of Isla. Next day, the remainder of the troops disembarked; and, entering Cadiz, we occupied part of the bomb-proof barracks under the ramparts; where we remained with Lieutenant-General Graham, who was chief in command.

I could not say that our reception by the inhabitants, on landing, was very flattering. Here and there, amongst the crowd, you could hear a "Viva Englese;" but the greater number received us with a gloomy suspicious silence. Setting aside other causes, it was really not to be wondered at, that the inhabitants should feel

little attachment to the English, when we consider that they had suffered so severely by the hand of Nelson and the British fleet, about four years before, and that the shattered remains of some of their vessels were still lying in the bay.

Cadiz was, in my opinion, a much finer town than Lisbon in point of width of the streets and cleanliness, and the situation of the town was infinitely more picturesque. From the ramparts, on the Atlantic side of the town, the view was very fine: to the left, we could see the African shore, with its mountains stretching out until their outline was lost in the distance, and became mingled with the clouds that kissed the horizon. Before you, the prospect was unconfined, and the eye was lost in the wide world of waters which lay before it, unless when it was arrested by a passing sail, or brought nearer the town by the noise of the breakers lashing the dark sides of the rocks, which ran out into the sea, and here and there showed their heads above water. On the side of the town next the bay, the Rota, Bay of Bulls, with the town

of Port St. Mary's, Porto Real, Isla, Checuelina, and Cape Trafalgar, brought the eye round to where it set out.

When we had anything to wash, we were obliged to go outside the walls to some of the cisterns, a short distance from the town. It was here I first became my own *washerwoman*. I was awkward enough when I began; but practice soon made me expert at it.

It was on one of these washing excursions, that I happened to pass a chapel; and seeing people engaged at some ceremony in it, my curiosity prompted me to enter. A corpse lay on a bier, with the face uncovered, and a bunch of flowers were placed in its hands, which were joined together in a praying attitude. The priest was performing the service of the dead over it; near him stood two little boys, with silver censers waving in their hands, filled with burning incense. The whole service seemed to me impressive enough. After it was finished, the corpse was removed to the outside of the chapel, and deposited in a hole in the wall resembling an oven; it was then covered

with quick lime; the mouth of the hole shut up with a stone, which fitted it; and the people retired. I do not know what their reason is for this peculiar method of interment; but the body must decay sooner in this way than by our method of burying.

As yet, none of the troops had been brought into action, with the exception of the light companies, who had some slight skirmishing at the out-posts. The French had attempted nothing of any consequence. They were very busy, however, prosecuting the siege—building batteries in every direction. There was one battery, called Fort M——. It lay on the French side, at the extremity of a point of land, stretching down from Porto Real into the bay, opposite to Puntallis. From this (had they manned it) they might have annoyed our shipping very much; and it was resolved that we should take possession of it.

Accordingly, one evening the three first men from each company of the regiment to which I belonged were turned out, in marching order, for that purpose.

At the quay, we were joined by a detachment of artillery, and were conveyed across the bay in man-of-war boats. On our passage we were joined by a party of seamen and marines; who, with a captain-commandant, surgeon, two subalterns, one of whom acted as adjutant, a lieutenant of artillery, and a midshipman, made in all about one hundred and fifty men.

When we reached the Fort, we used every precaution to avoid alarming the French if there had been any there; but it was quite unnecessary; for their picquet had retired, without firing a shot. After placing a picquet in front, we set to work, and got up three guns, which we had brought with us. This kept us busy enough until morning; when we got a better view of the isolated place we had taken possession of. The fort itself was about a hundred yards square; but it had been completely demolished on its sea-face; and the others were all more or less in ruins. The bomb-proofs were nearly all destroyed. In what remained there was not shelter for the half of our men; and, by a rule of division, often practised in

the army, that little was made less by the officers' appropriating the half of it to themselves;

Day had not long dawned when the French gave us a salute from a small battery, in the village at Fort Lewis; but, when we got our guns mounted, it was soon silenced. From that time we commenced with redoubled exertion to work at the battery—building up the parapets; and laying platforms for more guns. We were supplied with materials, *viz.* fascions, gabions and sand-bags, from Cadiz.

Here we were wrought like slaves, I may say, without intermission; for our worthy adjutant, who aimed at being a rigid disciplinarian; and was a great amateur in the drill way (which his company knew pretty well), was determined that no hard labour, or want of convenience for cleaning our things, should tempt him to deviate from a clean parade; and formal guard-mounting every morning, even although we had been out all night under the rain on picquet, or carrying sand-bags and digging trenches up to the

knees in stinking mud. All the varied forms of duty known in a militia regiment (with which he was best acquainted) were by him deemed indispensable:—and, in a place where we had no convenience for keeping our things in order, not even shelter for them, this exactness was certainly, to say the least of it, unnecessarily teasing. We were also obliged to stand sentry on different parts of the battery, full dressed, where there was no earthly use for us, unless for show; and I could perceive no reason the commandant and he had for their conduct, unless that, feeling the novelty of their situation—in command of a fort—they wished to ape, with their handful of men, all the importance of *leaders of an army*.

We were driven from guard to working—working to picquet—picquet to working again, in a gin-horse round of the most intolerable fatigue; which we never could have borne for any length of time, exposed as we often were to sun and rain, in a climate like that of Cadiz. But, even with all this, we had the mortification to find our best endeavours repaid

with the most supercilious haughtiness, and the worst of usage. We were allowed little time to sleep; and that little was often withheld from us.

But let it not be imagined that our officers participated in all this fatigue; they knew how to take care of themselves; and they could sit and drink wine in their bomb-proof at night as comfortably as in a mess-room at home. And it was a common amusement of the commandant, when he got warmed with it, to order the drum to beat to arms in the middle of the night—when the poor devils, who had perhaps just lost sense of their fatigue in sleep, would be roused up, and obliged to go to their several posts on the ramparts: and, when there, we were not allowed to stand steadily to await the coming of a foe (for the *blue devils* of the commandant's brain had peopled the different places of attack with millions for aught I know): and, after half-an-hour or an hour's hard fighting with the wind, we would *graciously* be permitted to go below to our births. But we would scarcely be lain down,

when we were again roused, to commence working.—This was the usual routine the most of the time we were here.

It may be well to remark, however (for the benefit of those officers who may wish to follow so *illustrious* an example), that the commandant had a most *ingenious* method of assembling his men quickly—he used to stand, with his fist clenched, at the top of the ladder leading from the bomb-proof, ready to knock down the last man that came up; and, as some one must necessarily be last, he of course was sure of the blow; and, as he was a strong muscular man, it used to *tell* (as we military men term it) on the poor fellow's head.

One man, I remember, who had suffered in this way remonstrated, and threatened to complain to his colonel; but the answer was a second “knock-down,” and an order to confine him between two guns in an angle of the battery, where he was exposed to the inclemency of the weather for many days and nights without covering; and, when his health was impaired by this usage, and he fell sick, he was

still kept in the fort, although it was the usual practice to send the sick to the general hospital in Cadiz. He was not allowed to leave the place until we all left it; and then, it is probable, if he had ventured to complain, he might have been flogged in addition to all he had suffered, for presuming to say anything against the Hero of M—.

We had now got up six guns and two mortars on the fort, which was all we could mount to have any effect. We were supported by a Spanish man-of-war and six or eight gun-boats; and, with them, we used to bombard the small village at Fort Lewis, and annoy the working parties coming down from Porto Real to build batteries. We often made great havock amongst them, with spherical case-shot. One day, in particular, I remember we brought down an officer who was riding on a white horse at the head of his party, and we saw them carry him off in a litter from the place where he fell.

About this time a severe gale came on, by which a great number of vessels were

stranded on the French side of the bay; most of them were abandoned by their crews, who got safe over to Cadiz; but one transport, containing the flank companies and staff of a battalion of the fourth regiment, ran ashore near Port St. Mary's, and they were all taken prisoners. They had their colours with them, and I heard afterwards that they had put them under the coppers and burned them, rather than let them fall into the hands of the enemy. Many of these vessels were richly laden; and, as they were sure ultimately to fall into the hands of the enemy, being also considered fair prizes when they run ashore on an enemy's coast, we procured a couple of boats and succeeded in securing part of the cargo of those nearest us, which was principally silk. We also got some pipes of wine and salt provision; which was all safely deposited in the entrance to the officers' bomb-proof, with the exception of the silk, which they took inside.

The wine and salt provision were kept there for the use of the officers. The latter, although hoarded up with great

care, ultimately fell into the hands of the French: and the only part of the wine we received was once, in lieu of better wine, which was sent over as a present from the Cortes, which the officers thought was more suitable to their own palates; and again on the first day of the bombardment.

Some time after, the silk that was deposited in the officer's quarters was divided according to the prize-money regulations.

I remember a man, of the name of John M—, who was on sentry one night over the wine and salt beef casks. Feeling himself thirsty, and seeing the spigot in the cask which was used to draw it, he was tempted to try how it tasted; but, unfortunately, when he got the vessel filled which he had procured for the purpose, he either lost the spigot, or could not get it in again. The stream of wine soon found its road into the officer's door-way, and the noise awakening some of them, they came out and found poor John all besmeared with wine, and the villainous king's-evidence jug at his feet.

He was immediately confined; and, a day or two after, a court martial was ordered to sit, for the purpose of trying the prisoner, for attempting to taste what he had wrought hard to bring in, and to which in justice no man had a better right than another. I do not know how they managed to find members for the court: as there were only a captain and three subalterns in the battery, some of whom must have been his prosecutors. Perhaps they got a dispensation from the Pope, as they were in the kingdom of his beloved son, Ferdinand. Be that as it may, John was tried, and, if I recollect right, sentenced to receive five hundred lashes.

The garrison was mustered on the rampart, and John stripped, and tied to the wheel of a field-piece. The boatswain's mate, with a monstrous ship cat in his hand, was standing drawing his fingers through it, seemingly impatient to commence, when, after all the trouble that they had been at, getting up this farce (for so it was considered by every one in the fort), John was pardoned, after a very *moving* speech from the commandant,

wherein he descanted on his *great goodness, tender-heartedness*, and all that.

For my part, I did not think it any great act of favour to pardon him, after exposing him, *stripped and tied up* before his comrades. His back certainly remained whole; but his feelings must have been as much hurt, as if he had received the punishment,

CHAPTER XI.

**VISIT TO THE STRANDED VESSELS—A BARBAROUS
DEED—SPANISH HULKS—FRENCH PRISONERS—
THEIR USAGE—A FRENCH SURGEON TAKEN BY
OUR PARTY WHO HAD SWAM FROM ONE OF
THEIR HULKS—HIS TREATMENT—ALLOWED TO
JOIN HIS COUNTRYMEN—THE FRENCH COM-
MENCE BOMBARDING US—THE CARNAGE WHICH
TAKES PLACE—NARROW ESCAPE—CONDUCT OF
OUR OFFICERS.**

THE stranded vessels, that lay along the shore, were often visited by straggling parties of the French, who used to carry off heavy burdens of the cargo. This stimulated some of our men to follow their example; but there was great risk in the adventure. They could go only at night, and run all hazard of their absence being discovered: that however might be averted by the sergeants, who of course shared in the booty; but the marsh which they had to cross was very

dangerous, the road uncertain, and they might have been taken by the enemy's picquets; but, notwithstanding all these obstacles, there were many who, either out of a spirit of adventure, or a love of gain, despised them all, and were well repaid for their trouble by the valuable articles which they found.

Our party often fell in with the French stragglers, who were there on the same errand ; but they were quite friendly together, and when any wine or spirits were got in the vessels, they used to sit down and drink together, as sociably as if they had been comrades for years. What every man got was his own, and there never was any dissension.

One night, I happened to be of the party. We had made our burdens, parted with our French friends, and left the vessel on our way to the fort. The party of the French had left it also. We had not proceeded far, when we missed one of our comrades; and, fearing that some accident had befallen him, we returned, and near the vessel saw him struggling with some one. We hastened up to him;

but, before we reached the spot, the person with whom he was engaged fell to the ground with a groan. At that moment, we saw our comrade stoop, and tear something from him. "What is the matter?" said one of our party. "Come away," said he, "and I'll tell you as we go along;" and he passed us on his way to the fort.

We were anxious to see who his antagonist was; and, on raising him up, we found that he was one of the French party, who had been with us in the vessel. He had been stabbed in the left side with a Spanish knife, which still remained in the wound. One of the party withdrew it. The blood flowed out of the wound with great force. The poor Frenchman gave a deep groan—a convulsive quiver—and expired!

"This is a horrid cold-blooded murder," said I. "Where is S——?" At this moment we heard the noise of footsteps approaching, and thinking it might be the comrades of the Frenchman who had been barbarously assassinated, we left the place precipitately, our minds filled with horror at the savage deed.

On our way to the fort we overtook S—; but none of us spoke to him. He, however, strove to extenuate his conduct, by saying that he had observed the Frenchman find a purse in a chest, that he had broke open, and seeing him linger behind his party, for the purpose of secretting it about his person, he had gone up to him, and asked a share of it. The man refusing this, a scuffle ensued, and he stabbed him in his own defence, the Frenchman having attempted to stab him. We knew this to be false; for the Frenchman had no weapon in his hand, nor near him; and we had no doubt, from what we knew of S—'s character, that he had perpetrated the murder for the sake of the money, which was gold doublons. He offered to share it with us; but, to the honour of the party be it said, not one would touch it; and, from that time forward, he was shunned and detested by all who knew of the murder. He never prospered after. I even thought that his countenance acquired a demon-like expression, that rendered it repulsive; and we had not been long in Portugal, when he went

to the rear, and died in great misery. After that we never returned to the vessels.

The Spaniards had a number of hulks moored in the bay, which Lord Nelson had made for them, on board of which they kept their French prisoners, who we understood were very ill used: nearly starved, and huddled together in such a way that disease was the consequence. Many of them died daily. They were kept until sun-set, and then thrown over-board, and allowed to float about in the bay. Every tide threw some of them ashore, and the beach was studded here and there with them continually. When our men discovered any of them, they scraped a hole in the sand, and buried them; but they were totally unheeded by the Spaniards, unless when they practised some barbarity on them—such as, dashing large stones on their heads, or cutting and mutilating them in such a way that the very soul would sicken at the idea.

I was one night on picquet, and along with the sergeant reconnoitering the ground

in front of the fort, as the French picquets were in the habit of coming close down on us when it was dark. We saw something white moving amongst the weeds near the shore, to the left of the battery; and we went down in that direction, to see what it was; but, in an instant, we lost sight of it. When we came to the place where we first saw it, we found the body of a man extended on the ground. This was not an uncommon appearance; but, as we had seen something moving, when we had been first attracted to the spot, I was induced to feel the body, to ascertain whether it was dead, and, to my surprise, I found it warm, and, assisted by the sergeant, I raised him up. It struck us that he might have only fainted, and we rubbed him for some time with our hands. He at last began to recover, and his first action, when he came to himself, was to fall down on his knees at our feet, and cry "Misericordia."* We did not at that time understand what he said; but we asked him, in English, how he had come there. Whenever he heard us speak, he

* Mercy.
M 3

sprung to his feet, and seizing our hands, he cried “*Vous etes Anglois—oh, bon Anglois—grace a bon Dieu—je suis bien heureux.*”*

We threw a great coat over him, and took him into the fort, where, placing him before a fire, and giving him some bread and wine, the poor fellow soon recovered himself. When it was discovered that he had no clothes on, one man took off his shirt and put it on him, another gave him a pair of trowsers, and he soon was comfortably clothed; but he could scarcely take time to put on the things for kissing the men’s hands. He poured out his thanks in French; but he saw we did not understand the language. He tried the Spanish with like success. He attempted a mixture of both; however with as little effect: but, when he pressed his hand on his heart, and the big drop gathered in his eye, he found, by the sympathizing tear which it excited, that no words were necessary to express the universal language of gratitude.

* You are English?—Oh, good English! thank God—I am very fortunate.

When he was perfectly recovered, we reported the affair to the commandant, and the artillery officer speaking the French language, he was questioned by him. In reply, he said that he was a surgeon in the French service; that he had been taken prisoner and confined on board one of the prison ships; that that night he had determined on making his escape, or perish in the attempt; that he had lowered himself down from one of the gun ports, quite naked, and had swam a distance of two miles; but he was so exhausted, when he reached the shore, that he had sunk down insensible at the time we had first seen him; when he recovered, his first idea was that he had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards, who, he well knew, would have butchered him without mercy; but, when he found by our language that we were English, he was overjoyed. He had saved nothing but a miniature of a female, which hung round his neck, and which he seemed to prize equal to his life; for when he recovered, the first thing he did was to feel if it was still there, and raise it to his lips and kiss it.

He was kept until next day in the fort, when he was sent over to Cadiz. He seemed distracted at the idea of going there, lest he should be delivered over to the Spaniards; and, although he was assured to the contrary, still he seemed to feel uneasy.

It was not many days, however, after that, when he was sent back, with orders that he should be escorted to our out-posts at night, and left to join his country-men. When night came, he took leave of the men in the fort with a kind of regret. I again happened to be of the party who escorted him. After leaving our picquet, the sergeant and I conducted him up the path-way, leading direct from the fort, until we suspected that we were near the French picquet, and there we told him that we would be obliged to leave him. He pressed our hands in silence: his heart was too full to speak; but we could easily guess what were his emotions. Joy at the idea of again rejoining his countrymen, with a feeling of regret at parting with those to whom he considered he owed his life, were contend-

ing in his mind; for my part, I felt that I could have almost laid down my life to serve him. "Adieu, mon ami," said he, as he pressed my hand for the last time. I felt the warm tears fall on it, and, I hope it will not be considered weak, when I say that mine mixed with his.

The night was dark, and we soon lost sight of him; but we lay down on the ground, and listened with anxious suspense, afraid that the French outpost sentry might fire upon him, before he had time to explain, and he might thus lose his life on the very threshold of freedom; but we did not hear the sentinel challenge him, nor did we hear any shot fired. We had therefore every reason to believe he reached his countrymen in safety.

During the time we were here, an attack was meditated on the French positions, and a number of troops were landed on the fort for that purpose. A strong party of seamen was also landed at Fort Catalina. They succeeded in storming it, and spiking the guns; but, in consequence of some signals being thrown up by adherents of the French in Cadiz, they

were alarmed, and the troops were obliged to return without effecting what had been originally intended.

We had now been in the fort about two months; and, from the time that we had silenced the small battery that had opened on us, when we first gained possession of the place, the French had not molested us, although they occasionally fired shots at the boats passing up and down the bay. We were well aware, however, that this was only a deceitful calm before a storm; for they had been busy all this time building batteries both in front and to our right in the village I have already mentioned, although they were hidden from our view by the houses.

At last, when every thing was prepared, they commenced their operations one night by blowing up the houses which had hitherto masked the batteries. I was out on picquet at the time; and we perceived them moving round a large fire which they had kindled. We suspected that they designed to attack us, and our suspicions were soon verified; for, in a

short time after, they gave a salute of grape shot, which ploughed the earth on every side of us; but this was only a prelude. A volley of red-hot shot, at the Spanish man-of-war, succeeded, which set her on fire, and obliged her to slip her cable, and drop down the bay. A volley or two more of the same kind scattered our gun boats; and we were then left to bear the brunt of the battle alone. Now it began in earnest. Five or six batteries, mounting in all about twenty guns, and eight or ten mortars opened their tremendous mouths, vomiting forth death and destruction. The picquet was called in.

There was a number of spare fascions piled up on the sea face of the battery, amongst which, for want of room in the bomb-proof, we formed huts. In one of these I lodged. They had been set on fire by a shell that fell amongst them; and, when I entered the fort, the Spanish labourers were busy throwing them into the sea. I ran to try to save my knapsack, with the little treasure which I had gained; but it was too late—hut and all

had been tossed over: there was no help for it. I did not know how soon I might be thrown over also. I was called to my gun, and had no more time to think on the subject. They were now plying us so fast with shell, that I saw six or eight in the air over us at once.

Death now began to stalk about in the most horrid forms. The large shot were almost certain messengers where they struck. The first man killed was a sailor who belonged to the Temeraire seventy-four. The whole of his face was carried away. It was a horrid-looking wound. He was at the same gun with me. "Ah! what will we do with him?" said I to a seaman next me. "Let him lie there," was the reply. "We have no time to look after dead men now." At that time I thought it a hardened expression; but this was my first engagement. Not so with the tar. He had been well used to them.

The French soon acquired a fatal precision with their shot, sending them in through our embrasures, killing and wounding men every volley. I was on

the left of the gun, at the front wheel. We were running her up after loading. I had stooped to take a fresh purchase, a cannon ball whistled in through the embrasure, carried the forage cap off my head, and struck the man behind me on the breast, and he fell to rise no more.

The commandant was now moving from place to place, giving orders and exposing himself to every danger. No one could doubt that he was brave. Had it been bravery, softened and blended with the finer feelings of humanity, he would have been a true hero; but _____. Our artillery officer behaved like a gentleman, as he had always done; and our subaltern in a tolerable medium: the midshipman in the style of a brave, rough and ready seaman. But, alas, how had the mighty fallen!—our brave adjutant, whose blustering voice, and bullying important manner, had been always so remarkable, was now as quiet as a lamb. Seated in an angle of the battery, sheltered from the shot, no penitent on the *cutty stool* ever exhibited such a rueful

countenance. There he sat, amidst the jeering and scoffing of the men, until the commandant ordered him down to the bomb-proof to superintend giving out the ammunition--merely to get him out of the way.

CHAPTER XII.

ACTION CONTINUES—GUN DISABLED—A DISPUTE
ENDED BY A SHELL—FIRING CEASES—FEELINGS
AND REFLECTIONS—SPANISH FLAG—THE EN-
GLISH SUBSTITUTED—BREACH IN THE BOMB-
PROOF—MAGAZINE—REINFORCEMENT—BLACK
PRINCE—LEAVE THE FORT—CADIZ.

THE carnage was now dreadful; the ramparts became strewed with the dead and wounded; and blood, brains and mangled limbs lay scattered in every direction: but our men's spirits and enthusiasm seemed to rise with the danger. The artillery officer stood on the platform, and, when he reported any of our shot taking effect, a cheer followed, and "at it again, my heroes," was the exclamation from every mouth. When any of our comrades fell, it excited no visible feeling but revenge. "Now for a retaliating shot" was the word; every nerve was strained to lay the gun with precision;

and, if it took effect, it was considered that full justice was done to their memory.

We had a traversing gun in the angle of the battery which had done great execution. The artillery sergeant commanded her; and they were plying her with great vigour. In the course of the day, however, as the man was returning the sponge after a shot, and the cartridge in the hand of another, ready to reload, a thirty-two pound shot from the French entered her muzzle, she rebounded, and struck the sergeant with her breech on the breast, and knocked him over insensible. The shot had entered so far that she was rendered useless, and abandoned.

The action was kept up the whole of that day, during which we had lost the best and bravest of our men. Our guns had been well directed at first; but, towards evening, the most of the artillery who had commanded them, had been either killed or wounded; and the direction of them was then taken by men who knew little about it. The consequence was, that much ammunition was used to little purpose. The artillery soldier at

the gun next to me was killed, and two men equally ambitious for what they considered the post of honour, quarrelled about it. From high words it came to blows; but the dispute was soon settled; for a shell, falling between them at that moment, burst and quieted them for ever.

I could scarcely define my feelings during the action; but, so far from feeling fear when it first commenced, and the silent gloom of the night was broken by the rapid flash, and reverberating thunder of the cannon, I felt a sensation something resembling delight; but it was of an awful kind—enthusiasm, sublimity and wonder, mixed with a sense of danger—something like what I have felt in a violent thunder storm.

The firing, on both sides, had been without intermission from two o'clock in the morning; but, as it now became dark, it was partially suspended. I then, for the first time, ventured to go below to the bomb-proof. The scene there was dismal—the wounded filled the whole place, and the doctor had not got through

with the dressing of them. During the day I had little time to reflect on anything: all was noise and bustle: but now, that I had time to look round, and saw the ramparts covered with the pale and disfigured corpses of those, who a few hours before, were rioting in the fulness of health and strength; and others writhing in agony, under the severe wounds they had received; I could not deny that I felt my heart sink within me, and sensations of a melancholy and solemn nature took place of those which had before excited my mind.

When day-light came in next morning, the firing again commenced as warmly as the preceding day; and the precision the French had attained with their shot was very remarkable. We had a flag staff of the usual size, on which was hoisted the Spanish colours. They had cut it across with a cannon ball, it was repaired, and again replaced; but it was not five minutes up, when another shot brought it down again. This occurring four or five times successively, gave great offence to the sailors, who attributed all that we had

suffered to fighting under the Spanish flag, and swore that if the union jack was up in its place, the French would not bring it down so easily. "There's that bloody Spanish flag down again," said one of the tars. "D——n it, Jack, I have got our boat's ensign here—let me go, and I'll soon run it up." He went, and assisted in repairing the flag staff; but, instead of again bending the Spanish flag to the halliards, he put the English in place of it.

A general huzza greeted its appearance. "Now, d——n it, we'll beat the French-dogs" said the seamen; but the cheering had attracted the notice of the commandant, and he ordered it to be hauled down again. Never was an order so reluctantly obeyed. In a few minutes, a shot cut through the flag-staff. "There it goes down again—Oh, d——," was the surly reply. "Let it lie there;" and there it lay; for no one would meddle with it. "Better to fight without a flag at all, than under such a bloody treacherous flag as that," said an old sailor. "I never could bear it, unless when I saw it flying at the mast head of an enemy."

By this time three of our guns were rendered unfit for service. They had made great impression on our parapet, and a breach in the end of the bomb-proof. A corporal of our grenadier company had gone below to get some refreshment, and just sat down on his knapsack, and was raising a tin with some wine in it to his mouth, when a shot entered the breach, and striking some small arms, that were placed against the wall, shivered them to pieces. One of the splinters entered his head, and he fell dead on the spot. The rest wounded several of the men beside him.

A shell fell, about the same time, at the magazine door. A blanket was the only partition between it and the powder. We were sure all was over, that it was impossible but the magazine would be blown up. We stood in awful suspense for the few seconds between its fall and bursting—it burst—and we already imagined ourselves in the air; but, fortunately, it did not communicate with the powder. There were two artillery men in the magazine at the time, whose feelings could not be very enviable.

In the course of the morning, General Stewart came over from Cadiz to inspect the state of the fort, when it was found that it could not stand out much longer. A reinforcement of men from different regiments had been sent over to assist us, in case of the enemy attempting to storm us in our disabled state ; but we received little assistance from them, unless in eating our rations, and drinking our liquor.

One of our sergeants, who, from his complexion, was called the "Black Prince," had installed himself commissary ; and, on the pretence of preventing the men from getting drunk, had seated himself beside the cask, which contained our ration wine ; and he fulfilled his duty so faithfully that he would not even give the men their allowance ; but gave it away very liberally to any of the strangers who could "*tip him the blarney* ;" and among hands "he did not forget himself." He got rather tipsy at last ; and, the men getting clamorous for their just allowance, to settle the dispute, he staved the cask, and spilt the wine about the place.

This was scarcely worth mentioning,

only that it will serve to shew on what an uncertain basis a soldier's fame rests; for he was extolled to the skies, and subsequently got a situation in the commissariat department for that action; while others, who had distinguished themselves by their valour and intrepid exertions, were passed by unnoticed. So true it is, that in general the surest passport to promotion in the service, is to evince a disposition to tyrannize over your fellows, and to seem regardless of their feelings and interests.

As it had been found that we could not keep the place, boats were sent to convey us to Cadiz. Mines had been previously laid, and a major of engineers had come over to superintend the operations for blowing up the fort; but he had scarcely taken six paces on the battery, when he was struck by a cannon shot, and fell a lifeless corpse.

It is remarkable to observe the covetousness of some men, even in the midst of danger. When he fell, the epaulettes were torn off his shoulders, and the gold watch was taken out of his pocket. The

watch was afterwards recovered; but not, I believe, until the chain and seals were disposed of.

The men were now busy gathering what things they had together, and moving down to the boats. Some of them had already sailed. I had now time to reflect on the almost naked situation I was left in; for I had thrown off my great coat at the commencement of the action, and some one had taken it away. I ran down to the bomb-proof, to see if I could find any thing to put on; but I met an engineer officer, at the end of the passage, with his sword drawn, who had been inspecting the train laid to the mine. He asked me, if I wished to be blown up, and ordered me off instantly.

On coming up to the ramparts, I found that all the men had left the fort with the exception of three or four, and the commandant. He was watching the motions of a strong party of French, who were evidently coming down to take the place. A number of the men, who had been killed, were lying on the ramparts. Some of them of the same regiment to which I

belonged. We resolved on giving them some sort of burial, as the last kind office we could perform. We gathered them into a temporary hut, which had been built of mud, and throwing it down over them. "Sleep there, brave comrades," said we, "far distant, and ignorant of your fate, is the wife or mother who would have composed your mangled limbs." Hurried and rude was their burial, and a heartfelt sigh all their requiem; but it was a thousand times more valuable than all the ostentatious trappings of affected woe.

We then hurried down to the boats; they were all gone but one; and, after entering, I learned from my comrades that two men of the party that had come to reinforce us had got themselves so beastly drunk that they could not stir, and that they had been left behind.

We were not a great distance from the fort when it blew up, but only partially. The French were still firing, and one of their shells falling into a boat, which preceded us, burst and killed three men, besides wounding others. We were taken

by the boats on board of the Invincible seventy-four, where we were very kindly treated: from that, we were conveyed to Cadiz.

The regiment I belonged to had removed to Isla Camp; but we were marched up to our old barracks in the bomb-proof; and a motley-looking group we were. Half naked and blackened with the smoke of the gunpowder, we looked more like chimney sweepers, than soldiers. We were received very coolly by the Spaniards. They did not seem to feel any commiseration for us, on account of what ~~we~~ had suffered. I imagined their looks expressed vexation rather, at any of us escaping alive.

When we reached the barrack, exhausted with fatigue and want of sleep, I threw myself on the stone floor. My mind was a chaos. The events of the preceding thirty hours were all jumbled together in my brain. Previous to that I had a good assortment of necessaries, with a hundred and fifty dollars, and some pieces of silk. I was now left with a pair of canvass trowsers, my shirt, shoes

and forage cap; but it was the fortune of war, and I soon forgot it all in a profound sleep. I do not know how long I slept; but when I awoke all my comrades had left the bomb-proof, away drinking, with the exception of one or two, who had been left as poor as myself.

I had received a wound in the leg, from a splinter of a shell during the action. At the time, I had paid little attention to it, but it had now become so inflamed, and swelled, that I could scarcely move it. My former excitement of mind, with the fatigue I had endured had now produced a proportionate debility, and my feelings were no way enviable. Nothing could be more lonely, desolate and heartless, than the state in which I felt myself the remaining part of that day.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOIN THE REGIMENT IN CAMP—RECEPTION—
PARTY ADDRESSED BY THE COMMANDING OFFI-
CER—DUTY OF THE TROOPS—GENERAL STEW-
ART—DONALD AND HIS COFFEE—BRITISH
FORCE IN CADIZ—GO INTO HOSPITAL—VISIT
FROM A TOWNSMAN—HIS SYSTEM OF RECRUIT-
ING—OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPANISH CHAR-
ACTER.

THE day following, we marched to join the regiment at Isla Camp. Our comrades turned out to receive us; and our hearts thrilled with exultation at the encomiums passed on our bravery. The poor fellows flew with alacrity to procure wine to treat us; amongst the rest, my comrade Dennis was not backward. He and I had been separated when I went to the fort, and he was now overjoyed to see me. He seized my hand, and shook it so long, and squeezed it so heartily, that I was ready to cry out with the pain; but

it was in the warmth of his heart that he did this; and, as such, I valued it. "Death and ounds, James," exclaimed he, "is it yourself that's in it; troth, I thought I'd never see you more, for, when I saw the shot and shell flying about ye like hailstones, I said to myself 'poor comrade it's all over with you:' but, thank God, here you are safe and sound." "Scarcely," said I. "What's the matter, my dear fellow; are you wounded?" "Slightly," said I; "but that is not the worst of it, I have all my kit on my back." "Och, if that's all, never fear, my honey—you'll never want while Dennis has a shirt in his knapsack, or a cross in his pocket." And his were not empty professions: my heart glows with grateful feeling to this moment at the remembrance of his disinterested kindness—in my chequered journey through life, I met few friends of his description.

After supplying me with things to change myself, he procured a canteen of wine; and, being joined by more of our comrades, who were willing to show their good will, and who had come equally well

provided, we sat down in the tent, and I soon forgot all that I had suffered.

When the wine warmed my head, I entered into a detail of our proceedings during the time we were in the fort, with a feeling of pride and exultation—"fought all the battles o'er again, and thrice I slew the slain." My comrades, ranged around, greedily devoured the relation; and their exclamations and remarks served to heighten my enthusiasm. I can smile now at the warmth of my feeling, and the high ideas I had then of a warrior's fame. Yet, I must say, that there is a feeling connected with military enterprize, which will scarcely fail to carry all before it, particularly in men of any imagination. Military glory or fame, calmly considered, certainly appears a mere bauble, a delusive *ignis fatuus*: but, show me the man, of any soul, who could take this view of it in the midst of battle; there the imagination soars unconfined beyond every trammel, and gets into the region of sublimity and enthusiasm.

Next day, we were called out. The regiment formed square, and the remains of our party was marched into it. We

were then addressed by our commanding officer in terms of the highest eulogy, and held out to the regiment as a pattern. The sergeant, who had so *gloriously* distinguished himself by staving the wine cask, was particularly addressed, and told that he would not be lost sight of. We were then dismissed; but, with the exception of this sergeant, I do not remember any of us who were thought of after the speech. For my own part, I know that I found difficulty enough in getting the sum of two pounds eight shillings—in lieu of all that I had lost!! The commandant, however, was soon raised to the rank of major, and not long after to that of lieutenant-colonel.

The regiments of the brigade in camp were busily employed at this time working at the batteries, which were building on the island, for which they received ninepence per day, in addition to their pay. They had also extra rations, such as coffee and sugar for breakfast, and a pint of porter daily; but the labour was very hard, and the exposure to the sun brought on sickness amongst them.

Still we had little reason to complain;

for we were under the command of a general who did not think it below him to look into the men's rights and interest, and anticipate their wants. It was not an uncommon thing, in a very wet morning, to find him up at our camp, ordering an extra ration of rum to be served out to the brigade. There were also double tents provided for us; as, in consequence of the heavy rains, the single ones were found insufficient; and on every occasion he paid the most indefatigable attention to our comfort. In him was found a rare combination of the rigid disciplinarian and the *soldier's friend*. He discharged his own duty faithfully and well; and he expected every one under him to do the same, and would admit of no excuse for the non-performance of it from either officer or soldier. To those who served under his command, in that place, it will be unnecessary to say that the officer to whom I allude was, Lieutenant-General William Stewart. His name will be associated in their minds with the character of a gallant and able general, and a steady friend to the soldier.

We generally turned out for the working party, at five o'clock in the morning; and our breakfast, which was coffee with bread, was always ready at that hour. I remember, the first time we had it, each man came forward with his mess-tin for his allowance, which was measured out by the cook. We had a Highlandman in the company, who had enlisted raw from his native hills, and who, I believe, had never seen any thing of the kind before. When he came for his allowance of the coffee, which was now nearly done, the cook was skimming it off the top very carefully, to avoid stirring up the grounds. Donald, who thought this a scheme to keep all the good part to himself, exclaimed, " Tam your plood! will you'll no gie some o' the sik as well as the sin?" Oh, certainly," said the cook (who was a bit of a wag); and, stirring the grounds well up, he gave him a double proportion. Donald came in, chuckling with satisfaction at having detected the knavery of the cook, saying, " If she'll socht to to sheat a highlandman, she'll be far mis-took." And, seeing the rest of his com-

rades breaking bread in their coffee, he did the same: by this time the eye of every one in the tent was on him, scarcely able to refrain from laughing. Donald began to sup it with his spoon; but, after taking two or three spoonfuls, grinding the coffee grounds between his teeth, and making wry faces, he threw the tin, contents and all, out of the tent door, exclaiming, " Tam their coffee! you might as weel chow heather, and drink pog water as that teevil's stuff. Gi'e Donald a cog o' brochan before ony o' your tea or coffees either."

The French had once or twice made a powerful attack on our picquets, but were repulsed with loss; and the skirmishing at our outposts, and firing from the batteries, were now carried on almost without intermission. We expected them to make an attack on us with their whole force; and scarcely a night passed without being turned out, in consequence of movements making on their side; notice of which was communicated to the troops by different coloured rockets, thrown up at our outposts.

At this time we had a strong force of British here. Besides artillery and engineers, we had a battalion of guards and nine or ten regiments of the line. There was also a strong fleet of British vessels in the bay: at one time we had three first-rate men-of-war, viz. the Caledonia, Hibernia, and Ville de Paris, besides seventy-four gun ships, frigates, and a great number of smaller vessels and gun boats; batteries were built on every commanding situation: one of which we used to call the Friars' battery, having been built by these gentry, and certainly among the best deeds they had done in that part of the country. It was on a very commanding situation, extending completely across the isthmus at its narrowest part, with a wide trench, which could be filled with water from the sea on either side.

At this time the wound on my leg, which I had paid little attention to, became so ill that I was obliged to go into the hospital; and I, in a great measure, lost sight of what was going on amongst the troops. I had now nothing to relieve the monotony of an hospital life, unless a

visit from Dennis now and then, when he could gain time from working or duty; and one visit from a sergeant (a townsman), who joined the regiment at that time, and had brought a letter from my parents. He had been long on the recruiting service, and was considered a first-rate hand at it. After some inquiries respecting my friends and native place, I happened to remark how successful he had been in getting recruits, and expressed my surprise that he should have been so much more so than others who had been on the same service. He replied, "No wonder at it—no wonder at all. I knew Glasgow well. It was my own place—knew the minds of the young fellows better than they did themselves—for I had been a weaver myself, and a lazy one too. I knew how I used to feel. In winter it was too cold, and in summer too warm to work. When it was good trade, I could not resist the temptation of drinking and going idle two or three days in the week; and, when it was bad, I had no time to work for trying to find out the cause, and setting the government

to rights. The truth is, you could scarcely ever catch a weaver contented. They are always complaining. Therefore, you would never have much trouble enticing them to enlist, if you knew how to go about it, or much in going after them; for whenever they got lazy, they came up, and lounged about the Cross. You could not manage them however the same as a bumpkin. They were too knowing for that. The best way was to make up to the individual you had in your eye, and, after bidding him the time of the day, ask him what sort of web he had in. You might be sure it was a bad one; for when a weaver turns lazy his web is always bad; ask him how a clever handsome-looking fellow like him could waste his time hanging see-saw between heaven and hell, in a damp unwholesome shop, no better than one of the dripping vaults in St. Mungo's church, when he could breathe the pure air of heaven, and have little or nothing to do, if he enlisted for a soldier; that the weaving was going to ruin, and he had better get into some birth, or he might soon be starved. This was, generally,

enough for a weaver; but the ploughboys had to be hooked in a different way. When you got into conversation with them, tell how many recruits had been made sergeants—when they enlisted—how many were now officers. If you saw an officer pass while you were speaking, no matter whether you knew him or not, tell him that he was only a recruit a year ago; but now he's so proud he wont speak to you; but you hope he wont be so when he gets a commission. If this wont do, don't give up chase—keep to him—tell him that in the place where your *gallant honourable* regiment is lying, every thing may be had almost for nothing—that the pigs and fowls are lying in the streets ready roasted, with knives and forks in them, for the soldiers to eat, whenever they please. As you find him have stomach, strengthen the dose, and he must be overcome at last. But you must then proceed quickly to work, before his high notions evaporate. You must keep him drinking—don't let him go to the door, without one of your party with him, until he is passed the doctor and attested."

"But," said I, "you would not find every one so easily duped." "To be sure," said he; "some of your sentimental chaps might despise all this; but they were the easiest caught after all. You had only to get into heroics, and spout a great deal about glory, honour, laurels, drums, trumpets, applauding world, deathless fame, immortality, and all that, and you had him as safe as a mouse in a trap.

"But, if all these methods failed, and the fellow remained obstinately determined against parting with liberty, the next resource was to pretend you had been joking him, that you had no wish to enlist any man against his will, that you had advised many a one not to enlist. Ask him in to take a friendly glass, ply him briskly, send one of your party out to put on plain clothes, let another of your men bring him in as a young man wishing to enlist, set him down next to the man you have in your eye. After allowing them some conversation, put the question to them, if they were talking about enlisting. 'Yes, I'll enlist,' would be the reply of your man, 'if this young

man will go also.' Perhaps he might; but, if not, your last resource was to get him drunk, and then slip a shilling in his pocket, get him home to your billet, and next morning, swear he enlisted, bring all your party to prove it, get him persuaded to pass the doctor, as it will save the *smart* should he be rejected. If he passes, you must try every means in your power to get him to drink, blow him up with a fine story, get him inveigled to the magistrate in some shape or other, and get him attested; but by no means let him out of your hands."

"At this rate," said I, "men are taken into the service by as unfair means as they are pressed on board a man-of-war. Were you not afraid of complaints being made to your officers; and did the magistrates not scruple to attest men who were drunk?"

"Not at all, man," was the reply. "It was war times. The officers knew it all—encouraged it all—called us clever fellows—they would not be fit for recruiting if they didn't. As for the magistrates, we knew who to go to on these

occasions. You know, it was all for the good of the service."

"But had you no honour or conscience of your own?" said I. "Honour or conscience!" said he, laughing. "Pretty words in the mouth of a private soldier. You must do your duty, you know. A good soldier does what he is ordered, right or wrong." "But I am afraid," said I, "that you did more than you were ordered." "Perhaps we were not ordered to do all that we did; but we were blackguarded if we didn't get men, and that was the same thing; and what's the use of a man if he can't take a hint?"*

"You must have made a good deal of money in this way." "Money," said he, "no no. Did you ever hear of men making money in the recruiting service? They must have come from the north if they did. No, our money didn't do much good—it all went in raking and drinking. 'It melted awa' like snaw aff a dyke,' as the old women at home would

* I do not know whether the sergeant exaggerated or not; but, in justice to the service, I must remark that such stratagems are neither authorised nor resorted to at present.

say, and we left Glasgow with bad kitts, and worse constitutions." "Well," said I, "you may be glad you have left it, for more reasons than one; and I hope you will never return to it." The conversation was dropped, and he soon left me; but I could not help thinking how many poor fellows were thus inveigled into a profession they did not like, and rendered miserable the remainder of their lives.

While here I was near losing my life in a very simple manner. There was a garden behind the hospital, which had formerly been a gentleman's house, kept by a Spanish gardener, who raised vegetables for the Isla market. In it there was a cistern, from which the water ran when required to water the garden; and this was supplied by a contrivance very unlike anything I have seen in Britain, although common enough on the Continent. It was raised from a deep well, by means of pitchers attached to the circumference of a large wheel, which, revolving by the power of a horse and gin, were successively filled and emptied into the cistern.

To this cistern, the men who were able brought their things to wash; but the gardener, who either thought that the soap used spoiled his vegetables, or from sheer crossness, tried every means in his power to prevent them.

One day, while here dabbling my linen, he came to the cistern in a rage, and seizing my shirts he threw them into a dung-hill close by. I did not feel well pleased at having my labour lost, and I applied my fist to his ear, in a very unceremonious manner. This he returned, as is the usual custom with Spaniards, by drawing his knife, and, making a stab at me. I saw there was no safety unless in closing with him, to get it out of his hand; but, as I got in upon him, he made a lounge at me, and drove it through my coat and shirt, grazing my ribs. I felt the sharp edge of the knife cut me, and I seized the hand which held it with both of mine, and tripped up his heels. We both came to the ground. He was now foaming at the mouth. I could not disengage his hand; and it would have been a doubtful thing who would have pre-

vailed had not some of my comrades come into the garden at that moment. They freed his hand from the knife, which they withdrew from my clothes, where it had been thrust, and threw it into the cistern. They then left me to manage the Spaniard as I best could, which I found no difficulty in doing, as he could not use his fists when his knife was gone. He however, managed to bite me several times, before I had done with him!!

I was obliged to be extremely cautious after this, as long as I was in the hospital; for I often saw him lurking about, eyeing me like a tiger watching his prey, and no doubt, if he could have got an opportunity he would have dispatched me.

We had little opportunity of knowing much about the Spaniards here; but what we did know gave us no great idea of them; particularly the lower class. They seemed to be a jealous-minded, vindictive and cowardly race, grossly ignorant and superstitious. Their soldiers are complete scare-crows (I speak of them as I found them in every part of Spain), badly clothed, ill paid, badly fed, and worse

officered. There could not be imagined a more barbarous-looking grotesque assemblage of men in the world than a Spanish regular regiment. No two men are dressed alike—one wants shoes, another a coat, another has a slip of blanket, with a hole cut in the middle, and his head thrust through it, a lapell hanging before and another behind, some with uniform caps, others with *monteras*. It is a rare thing to find one of them with his accoutrements complete; and their arms are kept in such order that, if brought into action, the half of them would be useless. On the march they have no regularity—just like a flock of sheep; and such chattering, and *caraco demonio-ing* amongst them, that you would take it for the confusion of tongues at Babel!

They rarely ever succeeded at anything unless Guerilla fighting, and then only when they could take their victims by surprise, or when they were double or triple the number of their enemy.

Those of the higher classes, who were well informed, seemed to have something elevated and noble in their character.

This was only however where they had shook off the trammels of superstition; for high rank had no effect on the others, unless to render them more despicable, by contrasting their splendid exterior with the dreary void within.

But, in thus pourtraying their character, I do not mean to say that they are worse than we would be under a similar government and religion. I am sorry I cannot give them a better character for their own sakes, and the glorious cause they have lately embarked in; but I must not deviate from the truth. There are certainly many brave and noble souls amongst them, whose hearts beat high in the cause of liberty and truth, and who have evinced it by their gallant enthusiasm; but unfortunately, they are but a small number in comparison to the millions who are sunk in slavish ignorance and superstition.

I am afraid the friends of liberty expect too much from such people. More than experience warrants, a change of mind must be brought about in the mass of the nation, before the new institutions can be lasting; and the bulk of the Spanish people are still too much

under the dominion of their spiritual masters. They may be induced to turn with the liberal party for a time; but the priests have them too well trained to the cage, not to return to it on the slightest adverse fortune; and those who cry “Viva the Constitution” to-day, may very readily be induced to cry “Viva the King and the Priests” to-morrow: added to this, the Cortes have proceeded too hastily in sweeping away institutions that have existed for so many centuries. A nation’s prejudices cannot so suddenly be wrenched away without danger. Innovations require to be slow and gradual, and keep pace with the “march of mind.” Yet though the friends of freedom may be disappointed in their too sanguine expectations, let them not despair. The Spanish national character is fast regenerating; and I hope the time is not far distant, when the glorious superstructure of freedom will be established on a surer foundation, than what it seems to have at present,* and Spain yet acquire a noble station as a free government in Europe.

* These remarks were written some months previous to the late change in Spain.—*Editor.*

CHAPTER XIV.

EMBARK AGAIN FOR LISBON—LISBON—VILLA
FRANCA—CONVENT OF ALCANTARA—RIO
MAYOR—CAVALLOS—THE WOUNDED RE-
TREATING AFTER THE ACTION OF BUSACO—
CROSS THE COUNTRY TO ALCOBACO—CONVENT
OF ALCOBACO—JOIN THE THIRD DIVISION OF
THE ARMY—CAMP NEAR TORRES VEDRAS—
CADACIERA—RETURN TO TORRES VEDRAS.

To return to my narrative:—We had been about seven months in Cadiz, when the regiment, to which I belonged, was again embarked; and, after a passage of eleven days, landed at Lisbon. We remained there two or three days, making preparation for our advance; and were then conveyed in boats up the Tagus to Villa Franca, on our way to join the grand army under the command of Lord Wellington. From Villa Franca we marched to the convent of Alcantara, situated in a bleak moor; it had been wholly deserted

by the monks, and the interior of it completely destroyed. From that we moved to Rio Mayor ; where we were, for the first time, quartered on the inhabitants : they seemed comparatively settled and happy to those of other places, where the troops had more frequently passed. The site of this village was beautiful—the river, from which it took its name, glided past it in silent majesty, skirted with rows of large trees ; between which could be seen the sloping fields of maize, interspersed with vineyards, where the bunches of large purple-coloured grapes were peeping forth, half hid by the green foliage with which they were surrounded, tempting, as it were, the passenger to try how deliciously they tasted ; and some of our men could not resist the temptation, although they were forbidden fruit. There was something about this village so calm and serene, combined with the simple scenery around, which forcibly brought back to my imagination the Sabbath in a country village on the banks of the Clyde. I almost considered myself at home ; and, when I left it a day after I felt grieved,

as if leaving a place with which I had been long acquainted.

After halting one day here, we proceeded on the main road as far as Cav-allos. Here we received information, from men going sick to the rear, that our army was retreating, after having fought an action at Busaco. This intelligence was soon confirmed by cars coming in with the wounded—those who had suffered slightly were walking, while others, whose wounds were more severe, were either sitting or lying on the cars, which from their construction were ill calculated for conveying sick or wounded men. They were about five feet long, and two and a half broad; but, instead of being boarded at the sides, there were stakes placed in holes about eighteen inches apart; the wheels were about two feet in diameter, rather octagonal than round; and, as they were not girt with iron, it was quite a common thing to have a piece broken out of the circumference, and, of course every time the wheel turned, the whole car would be violently shook. This was drawn by a pair of

oxen, yoked by the head. A peasant, with a long stick and a sharp nail in the end of it, walked before them, and every now and then run his goad into their shoulders to hasten their pace. This generally produced an awkward zig-zag trot for a few yards, when the jolting occasioned by the inequality of the wheels would cause the most excruciating torture to the poor fellows who were in them, and force them to groan with agony. In this manner they had to travel to Lisbon, a distance of forty or fifty miles, before they reached an hospital, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, going at the rate of two miles an hour, The wounded continued to pass the remaining part of the day, and during the whole night.

The continual creaking of their wheels was intolerable. I know of nothing in this country I could liken it to, unless the grating of an iron door on rusty hinges, but it is worse than that still. The Portuguese never put any grease on their wheels, for they think the noise of them drives away the devil. The conse-

quence is, that the axletree often takes fire with the friction, and burns completely through. I never after could bear the sound of those cars. The hideous grating noise was always associated, in my mind, with the pallid faces, and piercing groans of the wounded, which we that day saw passing.

Next morning, we got orders to march across the country to Alcobaço, where we were to join the third division of the army, commanded by General Picton. This was a beautiful little village, with a very large convent in it, occupied by either the Dominican or Augustine monks (the former I believe, one of the richest orders in Portugal).

When we entered the village, we found it empty of inhabitants; for they had fled with precipitation when they heard that our army was retreating, leaving every thing behind them, but what money or jewels they could carry about their persons. We were quartered in one of the passages of the convent. The monks had all left it, with the exception of a few who remained behind, to superintend the removal of some of their precious articles.

I forget how many hundred monks there were cells for in the convent, but an idea of its size may be given, when it is understood that a whole division of the army consisting of not less than five thousand men were lodged in the galleries alone, without filling them. Attached to it was a spacious chapel, the whole inside of which was decorated in the most superb style. The walls covered with valuable paintings, and in it a magnificent organ.

In the convent was the library, which contained a selection of many thousand volumes of the most rare and valuable books, with philosophical apparatus of every description. I could not but feel grieved, when I saw the poor monks that were left wandering like ghosts about the deserted premises, with a melancholy abstracted air. One I observed in particular: when he cast a glance around the library, as if he was taking a last farewell of all that constituted his happiness, the big tears came into his eyes, and rolled down in succession over his cheeks; but, seeing he was observed, he hastily brushed them

away with the sleeve of his tunic, and left the room ; but not without casting a “longing, lingering look behind.” It was the last, I believe; for the French got possession of it in two days after, and before they retreated they burnt it to the ground, a deed worthy of the darkest age. Goths or Vandals could not have done more.

The kitchen of the convent, which was on the sunk floor, presented a scene of plenty, which was not very favourable to the opinion of their severe abstinence. Certainly, if the good fathers lived as well every day as they seemed to do while we were here, they could not boast much of fasting; for there was a profusion of every delicacy which could be thought of in their larders and kitchen. In the latter, they had cisterns filled with water, in which they kept fish, brought alive from the coast for their use. Their cellars were filled with pipes, almost without number, of the choicest wines, and the gardens belonging to the convent contained the rarest and finest fruit, besides vegetables and plants of every description.

To judge from what we saw, they ought to have been the happiest fellows imaginable. Good eating, good drinking, fine grounds to walk in, and plenty of books! What could they wish for more! It is likely, however, that their usual mode of living was not so luxurious as we were inclined to think from what we saw of their kitchen; but I suppose they considered it better to use what they could of their dainties, than leave them to the French; and, to tell the truth, the poor monks did not seem to have any great appetite while we were there; for any of our men who entered the kitchen were liberally supplied with any thing that was cooked.

Previous to the regiment being dismissed, the colonel cautioned us against taking anything which had been left by the inhabitants. Before the division came in, I believe this order was punctually obeyed, and our men walked peaceably up and down the streets, the same as they would have done in a village at home; but, when the other regiments, composing the division, arrived, the scene was soon

changed; for they scarcely took time to take their knapsacks off, before they commenced breaking up the doors, and plundering every thing they could lay their hands on.

Some of our men, considering, I suppose, that they might as well have a share of the spoil as the others, joined in the throng; but they had a lesson to learn which some of them paid for rather dearly. They were not aware, or they had forgot, that there was a provost marshall* attached to each division. "And, when they thought, good easy men, full surely their harvest was a ripening," he came upon them with his guard. The knowing ones made good their retreat as well as they could; but our *innocent boys* (as the Irish regiments in the division called them), not being acquainted with his person or power, kept their ground, and were so warmly received that they did not forget either him or his kindness while in the division; but *innocent* as they were,

* The provost marshall is invested with power to inflict summary punishment, on all soldiers whom he may find plundering, or straggling from their regiment.

they were not the only sufferers; for many of the most knowing of the *old* hands were punished also. In fact, the provost's drummers never ceased flogging from that time until night.

An inspection was made next day of the division, to ascertain whether they had any plunder in their knapsacks; and anything found more than the regulated compliment of necessaries was taken from them. The town fell into the hands of the French the following day, and it may be thought that it would have been better to allow us to take the things left than that they should fall into the hands of the enemy; but nothing is more subversive of discipline in an army than the habit of plundering, exclusive of the men, through covetousness, burdening themselves in such a way that they cannot march. Whether the means used to prevent it, were the best and most efficient I do not pretend to say; but there can be no doubt as to the necessity of preventing it as much as possible.

In the course of this day, the monks who had been left took their departure in

chaises, and took not a few boxes of doublons with them. The greater part of the pipes of wine in the cellars were staved, to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy. We left the convent that afternoon, and, having marched as far as Torres Vedras, encamped outside of the town.

When I say encamped, I do not mean that we pitched tents; for the army were not supplied with tents, until the last campaign in 1813-14. At this time, the blue canopy of heaven was all our covering, the earth our bed, and a single blanket our bed-clothes.

A newly ploughed field, on the face of a hill, was our portion. We got out our blankets, and lay down, expecting to get a comfortable nap, although the weather was rather cold; but, towards morning, it began to rain so heavily that we were soon wet to the skin. Some, who had a little wisdom in their heads, got up, and packed up their blankets; but others lay still, until they were literally floated with water and mud, which came rolling in streams down the ridges, in such a way

that they could scarcely be distinguished from the mud round. They were then obliged to get up, dropping, and squeeze their blankets in that wet and dirty state into their knapsacks. The rain got heavier, the longer it continued, and we stood冥iled together, shivering with cold and wet. At last, an order came for us to march into Torres Vedras; but such a march I never saw, even in the worst of times afterwards. We were novices in the business, and not yet weather-proof. Had it not been that the town was so near, we would have occupied three or four miles of a line of road, we were so straggled. The ground was of a clayey nature, and, with the rain that fell, it had become like birdlime. Our feet stuck fast at every step, and our shoes were actually torn off, and many of them were left lying in the clay. Some were walking barefoot; others in their stockings, without shoes; and more had one shoe on, and another carrying in their hand. We were a set of drenched and miserable looking creatures, and the officers were in as bad a plight as ourselves.

At last we reached the town and got into houses; but the village was too small, and we were crowded in such a way that we had scarcely room to sit down. In the course of the day, however, arrangements were made; and some of the regiments sent to other villages, so that we were better accommodated.

During the time we were in the Peninsula, the troops suffered much from exposure to rain, and nothing could render a soldier so uncomfortable as having wet clothes about him; nor, I believe, hurt his health more, when first exposed to it. I have often wondered that no means were taken to prevent this. Many of the officers had oil-skin cloaks that completely covered them. Some such thing for the men, would have been neither expensive nor heavy to carry, and would have been the means of saving many lives. I am led to remark, at the same time, that laced boots would have been much superior to shoes in travelling bad roads; or, if shoes were used, some better contrivance than the common gaiter strap might be substituted, which would prevent them

from being torn off the feet. Much more attention ought also to be paid to the quality of the shoes themselves; for, in general, they are of the very worst kind; and it was no uncommon thing for our store shoes to be in tatters before we had worn them a week.

After a stay of a few days here, we removed to Cadaciera in the same line of position, which extended from the Tagus to the sea. We had not long taken up our quarters in the village, where our whole brigade was, when a peasant entered it, driving a flock of sheep before him. In a moment, a race was made amongst them by some of the soldiers. Others, stimulated by their example, followed; and, in a few minutes, officers and men promiscuously could be seen scrambling for the mutton. Dennis joined the throng, and had seized one of them, at the same moment that an officer of the Irish regiment in the brigade made a grasp at it. "Give me that sheep, sir," said the officer in an authoritative tone. "Arrah, be aisy, honey," said Dennis. "Kill a Hessian for yourself, if you

pleasè."* The officer relinquished his claim, and pursued another. The poor Portuguese shepherd stood like a statue, not knowing well what to do. At last, when he found himself relieved from all his charge, he went away, lamenting and muttering curses on the "*ladrões Eng-
lese*," to make his complaint to the general.

Soon after, a wine store was found out, and, as plundering was the order of the day, the contents of it were soon lessened. This depredation was discovered by the men becoming intoxicated. The most severe investigation and search took place; and those with whom any of the stolen property was found were confined, tried by a court martial, and flogged; but it was not the most guilty that suffered.

While we remained on this position, we were obliged to be under arms two hours before day-light, and remain until clear day; and, for a few days after, these

* A common expression amongst Irishmen. I asked Dentis what it meant. He said that, during the rebellion, a number of Hessian soldiers had been landed in Ireland, and an "United Man," having shot one of them, was busy plundering him, when one of his comrades came and asked where. "Kill a Hessian for yourself, my gay fellow, was the reply."

two hours were pretty well occupied by punishment.

I cannot adduce any reasonable excuse for this wanton breach of honesty; for we were regularly supplied with rations at the time; but I imagine that most of the men were led into it by the example set by others, without taking time to think anything about the impropriety of the action. The soldier could scarcely think that there was any harm in the deed which his officers joined in. I have often smiled with contempt, when I have heard officers, who were secured by their commission from corporal punishment, expressing their opinion that it was the only means to keep the *blackguard rascals* they had command of in order; when, by their own conduct, or by participating in what was stolen, they were worse than the men they blamed. Yes, I have seen an officer quietly eat what one of his men was flogged for procuring, without making any effort to save him. It was strange, how partially the faults of officers were looked over, when the poor devils, who had the misfortune to be private

soldiers, were made scape-goats for the sins of the whole. No excuse, certainly, can be alleged for a depredation of the kind now related ; but I am very certain that flogging is neither a good preventative nor a remedy.

I never knew a bad man amended by it; and I have known many a good man, who had committed some trifling crime, and was punished for it, lose all respect for himself, and in a sort of desperation, considering that he was already degraded as far as he could be, plunge recklessly into crime.

Let me ask one simple question at the advocates for corporal punishment—Would they recommend it to be practised on officers? Why not? Do they think that the one is not stimulated by the same feelings and passions as the other? Do they say that the officer, from his better education and habits, does not require it? This, I know, in most cases will not hold good; for, while men can get into the service as officers, either by interest or purchase, without any preparatory education, it will be found that

they, in many cases, are even more ignorant than the men they command; but, suppose for a moment that they were so, would this not prove clearly, what I have before advanced—that the only plan to make men good soldiers, is to induce them to cultivate their minds, and give them a character to uphold. Surely, if the officer's education and habits makes corporal punishment unnecessary, it ought to have the same effect on men, made of the same materials; but it is a melancholy fact that, in the British army, there does not exist any sufficient incentive to make one private soldier distinguish himself more than another.—The man who is hardened in crime, and he who inadvertently may commit one, are generally treated in the same manner.

I have known a man, who had maintained an unimpeachable character in the regiment he belonged to for twelve years, receive five hundred lashes for the first crime he had been found guilty of, viz. eating part of his dinner while on sentry. Terror seems to be the only engine of rule in the army; but I am fully per-

suaded in my own mind that, if a more rational method was taken, the character of the soldier in quarters would be as exemplary as in the field.

All the well-behaved men in a regiment cannot be made non-commissioned officers; but many distinguishing rewards or honours could be conferred in a gratifying manner on the soldier, whose superior moral conduct or improvement in his education, deserved them. This would be attended with the most happy results.

I hope these remarks will not be considered ill placed or injudicious; they are the result of long experience.

To go on with my relation:—When settled in a place for any time, the brigade assembled on Sundays for divine service. We were always in full marching order on these occasions; and not uncommonly had a field-day after it. If a person was to judge from the hitching of knapsacks, and wry faces that were making, during this ceremony, they would have thought the soldiers would rather have dispensed with it; but, I dare say, the anticipation of the drill that was to follow, prevented

them from feeling much benefit from their devotions.

The first Sunday after the outrage already related, when the chaplain left his station, General Picton took his place not to *pray* but to give us a *sermon*.

This was the first time he had addressed us. I felt anxious to examine the features of a man who had been so much the public talk on account of his reputed cruelty at Trinidad. I could not deny that I felt a prejudice against him, and his countenance did not do it away; for it had a stern and gloomy expression, which added to a very dark complexion, made it no way prepossessing; but, when he opened his mouth, and began to pour forth a torrent of abuse on us for our conduct, and his dark eye flashed with indignation, as he recapitulated our errors, “hope withering fled, and mercy sighed farewell.” He wound up the particular part of his speech addressed to us with—“*You are a disgrace to your moral country, Scotland!*” That had more weight than all his speech. It sunk deep in our hearts. To separate a Scotchman from

his country—to tell him he was unworthy of it—is next to taking away his life.

But General Picton was not the character which we, by prejudice, were led to think him. Convinced of the baneful effects of allowing his men to plunder, he set his face sternly against it, but in other respects he was indulgent; and, although no man could blame with more severity when occasion required, he was no niggard of his praise when it was deserved. Nothing could surpass his calm intrepidity and bravery in danger; and his presence in battle had the effect of a talisman, so much had his skill and valour gained the confidence of the men under his command. Few men had more prejudice to struggle with, in a public capacity, and long was the sun of his fame obscured by envious and lowering clouds. It at last burst forth in all its splendour; but he was scarcely warmed by its genial rays, when he fell in the field of battle, verifying the words of the poet, “that the paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

CHAPTER XV.

ALCOENTRE—GENERAL—ANECDOTES—OUR ADVANCED POSTS ATTACKED—THE FRENCH DRIVEN BACK—REVIEWED BY LORD WELLINGTON—ADVANCE—RIO MAYOR—ALGANEYDE—PORTO DE MOS—CRUELTY OF THE FRENCH—LERIA—POMBAL—LEAVE THE MAIN ROAD TO TURN THE LEFT FLANK OF THE FRENCH.

FROM Torres Vedras, we removed to Alcoentre, a small village some miles in rear of Rio Mayor; and we were kept pretty busy while in it, strengthening our position, making batteries, breast works, abattis, &c.

The general of the brigade was quartered in the same village; and, as he had or seemed to have a great antipathy to every thing Scotch, our regiment of course was included, and he found means to annoy us a good deal. . . . Perhaps, he believed, with many people in England, that the Scotch were untutored savages,

who run wild about their native hills, eating raw oats like horses, with nothing but a kilt to cover their nakedness, and that they had no right to receive any other treatment, when they entered the army, than what is usually given to any wild animal when caged. "Rousing up with a long pole" seemed to be his hobby. When exercising in the field, our regiment could do nothing right. When our guard turned out to salute him, they were either too late, or they did not present arms properly; and he would order the sergeant to drill them for an hour; and, while he stood bye, he would ease his stomach of the load of Billingsgate, which he had brought ready prepared for the occasion. "D----d Scotch---brutes---savages---dirty---stupid---barbarous," &c.

I have often been led to think that he studied expletive on purpose. He pretended he could not understand a word that any of us said—that we spoke *Gaelic*, and his aid-de-camp was called to interpret, although he had no right to understand what was said more than himself; for, I believe, he also was an Englishman.

As a sample—he once took a fancy to the wooden cases which the Portuguese use instead of stirrup irons, and ordered his Scotch servant to get a pair for him; for, although he disliked the Scotch, he employed them as his servants. The man procured them; but they were not fellows. "Well, sir," said the general, "have you got those things?" "Yes, sir, but they are no marrows." "Marrows! marrows! what's that? what's that?" and, calling his aid-de-camp, he asked him what "the Scotch savage" said. "He means, sir, that they are not fellows." "Poh! poh! you surely do not pretend to understand what is no language." "That is his meaning in his own language, sir." "Nonsense, sir, you are as bad as he; go and read your dictionary."

He was very strict in duty affairs, particularly in details, which perhaps another general would not have troubled his head about. He was very fond of surprising the sentinels at the outposts, by taking circuitous routes, and keeping under cover of the bushes. On one occasion, however, he met his match, if the story

reported was true: but, as I only had it from report, I will not pledge myself for its truth.

One of the men on picquet was planted as outpost sentry on the road leading to Rio Mayor. "Now, George," said the corporal to him, as he was leaving him, "mind that the general is out in front, keep a good look out, or he may surprise you, and you know the consequence. Be sure you challenge in time." "Leave that to me," said Geordie. A short time after (it was dusk when he was posted) he heard some one coming up the road very cautiously, as if they wished to avoid observation. At last, when about to turn the road, the individual who was on horseback clapped spurs to his horse, apparently for the purpose of passing him before he could challenge. There was no time to lose, and many a poor fellow might have been so confused at being taken unaware, that he would have neglected to challenge before the person was on him. Not so with Geordie. The moment he saw him quicken his pace, he challenged. The challenge was either

not heard or purposely unheeded. Another challenge was given, the General continued his gallop without answering. "You'll no tak me in that way, my gentleman," said Geordie; and, as he gave the third and last challenge, he came to the present, and made a bullet whiz past the General's ear. The horse was drawn in immediately. "What do you mean, to shoot your general, you rascal?" "I dinna ken wha folk are in the dark; but, whether you're a General or no, my orders are to fire at ony body that attempts to pass me without answering when I challenge. It's the General's orders; and, I ken what I would get if I didna obey them." "Well, sir, I am your General; and I wish to pass into the town." "I'm no sure about ye—ye may be some French spy for onything I ken; and ye maun just stay whar ye are till the sergeant o' the picquet comes; he'll no be lang now, for the report o' my piece would alarm them." At that moment the picquet arrived, and the General was allowed to proceed; but, from that time, he did not trouble the outpost sentries so much.

Some time before we left these quarters to advance, an attack was made by the French, under General Junot, on our advanced troops; and we were ordered under arms to defend our position, in the event of them pushing forward. During that day, and the succeeding night, the baggage of the troops in front, along with the inhabitants of the surrounding country, filled the road leading through our village. It was a melancholy sight to see the poor natives, carrying their children, and any little thing which they were able to bring with them, moving along the road, after having left their homes and property—cast on the world without a prospect, travelling they knew not whither, desolate and friendless. In a few days they might be reduced to beg, or perhaps (what was not uncommon in Portugal) die of hunger. Alas! thought I, what misery war causes! I hope I will never see my own country in such a state; but it has been, and it may be again. I brought the picture home; but I could not pursue the idea: it was too distressing. *Bad as this place is, said I to myself, and much*

as we have to endure, I would willingly remain in it for life, rather than see Britain the seat of war: and, I firmly believe, that was the sentiment of all around me.

The French were beaten back, and our troops resumed their former station; but few of the inhabitants returned. Not long after this we were reviewed, along with part of the first division, by Lord Wellington. From the place where we were assembled, we could see Santarem, General Massena's head-quarters. Next day, the whole army was ordered to advance, as Massena had retreated during the night. This opened the campaign of 1811. From Alcoentre we marched to Rio Mayor (our former quarters, when we were on our way to join the army); but it was sadly altered—the inhabitants had mostly all left it; the houses were in ruins; and it wore a desolate appearance. Next day we crossed to Alcaneyde. Many of the houses were on fire, when we entered. This was the dirtiest of all the dirty villages in Portugal that I have seen; it was actually a dunghill from end to end.

From that we proceeded along a very stony road towards Porto de Mos. The surface of the surrounding country, on this day's march, was completely covered with stones. It seemed as if they had fallen in showers from the clouds: they were, in general, small: but, here and there, very large ones were poised on one end, and so completely balanced, that, although they were many tons weight, they could be moved by the slightest touch.

We entered Porto de Mos by a fine avenue of trees. There was a large convent fronting us as we entered, which had been set on fire by the French, as well as many of the houses. I never before witnessed such destruction. The finest furniture had been broken up for fire wood; the very floors torn up; beds, cut in pieces, with their contents, thrown about, intermixed with kitchen utensils, broken mirrors, china, &c. &c. all in one heterogeneous mass of ruin.

We had scarcely taken up our quarters, until I was called out for duty, and placed on the commissary guard. The mules, with the stores, had arrived, and

the store-keeper looking for a place to put them in, when we joined him. At last he pitched on a chapel for the purpose. There was a large fire in the middle of the floor, on which was heaped broken pieces of the altar, wooden images, frames of pictures; even the ornamented wood-work of the organ was broken up for the purpose.

In searching for the cleanest place to set down the bags of biscuit, we found a door leading to some place apart from the chapel. As it was quite dark, I caught up a burning piece of wood to inspect the place—but, what was my horror, when I entered and found the half-consumed skeletons of human beings on every side; some lying, others kneeling, and more of them standing upright against the walls! The floor was covered with ashes, in many places still red. I stood fixed to the spot—the burning stick dropped from my hand. I could find no epithet bad enough to designate such monsters of inhumanity. I informed some of my comrades of what we had seen; and we re-entered. Such an appalling

sight was never witnessed. Of those who had sunk on the floor nothing remained but the bones: while the others, who were in a kneeling or standing posture, were only partially consumed; and the agonized expression of their scorched and blackened features, was awful beyond description.

On going to the upper end of the apartment, I perceived a bag lying on the floor with some thing in it. I was almost afraid to open it, lest some new object of horror should present itself. I was not mistaken in my apprehensions; for, when the bag was examined, it was found to contain the dead body of an infant, which had been strangled; the cord used for that purpose still remained about its little neck. "Savage fiends!" said I, "is helpless innocence no protection from your cold-blooded cruelty? How depraved and lost to every feeling of humanity must have been the wretches who perpetrated this deed!!!"

Next morning, we continued our march to Leria; where I was relieved off guard, and found the regiment quartered in a

large convent. We remained here the succeeding day.

On the top of a hill, to the left of the town, was a sort of redoubt. I went with Dennis to take a view of the place; and, going up to where some of our soldiers were standing, we found three children lying, two already dead, but the other was still breathing. There were pieces of biscuit lying beside them, which our soldiers had brought—but it was too late. They had evidently perished with hunger. One of them had expired with the bit in his mouth. This was part of the horrors of war; but only a part. The wanton cruelty of the French soldiers, on this retreat, defies description. Fiends let loose, with a commission to destroy mankind, could not have exceeded it.

From Leria we advanced to Pombal; where our division left the main road, and struck off to the right among the mountains, to turn the left flank of the French.

CHAPTER XVI.

COME UP WITH THE FRENCH—ATTEMPT TO CUT OFF THE RETREAT OF THEIR REAR GUARD—FAIL—HARASS THEIR RETREAT—WANT RATIONS FOR TWO DAYS—HOPE EXCITED BY SEEING LOADED MULES COMING TOWARDS THE DIVISION—DISAPPOINTMENT—ON PICQUET MILL—STRATAGEM—COME UP WITH THE FRENCH AT SABUGAL—INSTANCE OF FRENCH CRUELTY—ENCAMPMENT.

AFTER we left the main road, it would be impossible to give any regular account of our route or halting places; for, while we were among the mountains, it was nothing but a series of marching and counter-marching, up one hill, and down another, in search of the enemy. As to the names of places, few of us knew anything about them; and where we halted for the night was uniformly designated by the word camp.

The first place we came up with the French, was near a ravine, which ran up

between the mountains, with a village at its extremity. We were advancing on a hill which overlooked this ravine, when a cannon shot from the French struck our column, killed a sergeant, and wounded two or three men, besides tearing our armourer's knapsack open, and scattering its contents (which were principally his tools) about in every direction. The poor fellow was so frightened, that he grew sick, went to the rear, and soon after died. We were then ordered back from the verge of the hill; and, descending, marched round its base into the ravine; and here we saw the French retreating in columns towards the village. Our light companies had been skirmishing before we came up; and they were now briskly engaged with their sharpshooters, who were covering the retreat. Some of their columns were observed to be much in rear of the others; and the General, thinking that they might be intercepted, and taken prisoners, ordered those men who could swim to the front, for the purpose of crossing a river, which run down the centre of the ravine: they were

headed by one of our majors, and took the river; but, as it was found deep, and running very strict, there was some difficulty in getting over. In consequence of this, the French were enabled to reach the village before they could be intercepted, which they set fire to as they passed through. It was now near dark, and we passed to the right of the town, where we encamped.

They were out of sight next morning, and we had to commence the hunt again, which was an arduous task, for, no sooner did we get to the top of one hill, where we had seen them assembled, than we found them formed on another. The vallies, which lay between the mountains, were so narrow, that they were more like great clefts than anything else; and the sides so steep, that we had to scramble on our hands and feet to ascend them.

During the time that they were leading us this wild-goose chase, we were very ill supplied with rations, often without bread and rum for two days together; and, when we did get it, perhaps only half allowance. We were almost always sup-

plied with beef, but it was of that description, that there was little nourishment in it. The cattle were brought from Barbary, and often had to travel many hundred miles before they were used, with very little to eat on their journey; the consequence was that, when killed they were nothing more than a mass of emaciated muscle, with a semi-transparent covering of, what would be a perversion of language to call, fat—it was more like a coating of train oil. It was never bled properly; and, when boiled, it was as tough and stringy as a piece of junk. The water it was boiled in, was dignified with the name of soup: and, if the blood which boiled out of the beef, along with the wood ashes that fell into it, constituted soup, we had it in perfection.

One day we had halted rather early; at this time we had been without rations for two days. Many a curse was poured on the head of the commissary, who was considered the responsible person. "There comes the stores, at last," cried out one of the men. "Where? where?" said those around. Every eye was now directed

to a hill at some distance, where a long train of mules were perceived successively rising over its summit, and bending their way towards the division. The men were in transports of joy; a general cheer greeted their appearance.

“We will have full rations to-day,” cried one; “and rum too,” said another, “for I can see casks on the mules.” Another cheer succeeded this discovery; and we were dancing about overjoyed. “Who goes for the rations? Get out blankets for the biscuit, and camp kettles for the rum.” There was soon plenty of volunteers for this duty. The mules had, by this time, got into a sort of defile. Every eye was on the stretch, waiting for their re-appearance. As the first mule emerged from the place where they were hid, every face was dressed in smiles; but the next second produced an effect, similar to that which a criminal might feel, who had been informed of his reprieve on the scaffold, and the next moment told it was a mistake; for it turned out to be mules with ammunition for the division. Never did I witness such a withering.

effect on men, as this disappointment produced. We stood looking at each other for a minute, in all the agony of hope deferred; the next was opened by a torrent of execration on all concerned. Those who have never experienced the extremes of hunger can form no idea of our feelings.

A day or two after this, we crossed a river and ascended a hill, where we encamped. Dennis and I were for duty, and both placed on the out picquet, which was posted on the face of a hill in front of the division. The French was on the opposite rise; and a small river ran at the foot of it. We had only got one day's rations from the time the incident mentioned above occurred; and, as Dennis expressed it, "our bellies were thinking our throats were cut."

I procured leave from the officer to go to the river for water; intending to proceed a little farther down, to see if I could find anything that I could eat. Turning round the hill, I came to a mill: and, entering it, found a number of soldiers belonging to different regiments of the

division busy grinding Indian corn; others were employed drawing a baking of bread, which the French had left in their hurry, when we took up our position. I attempted to help myself to some corn, which was lying in a basket.—“Drop that like a hot potato,” said one of the Connaught Rangers. I tried another basket, but it also was appropriated; and, as there were none of my regiment there, I could not expect to succeed by force; so I left the place, sorrowful enough, on my way back to the picquet, with a cargo of cold water—poor cheer, certainly. But, just as I turned round the hill, I met my friend Dennis, who had got leave from the officer on some pretence to go down to the river, I told him my melancholy story; paused for a moment; then, ~~exc~~ ^{exc} hand to his forehead, ~~exc~~ ^{exc} “Now I have it! Give ~~exc~~ ^{exc} When I gave them to him, ~~exc~~ ^{exc} the water, and slung them over his ~~exc~~ ^{exc} der. “Now, sir,” ~~exc~~ ^{exc} said he, “and I ~~exc~~ ^{exc} He then comm ~~exc~~ ^{exc} ed runni ~~exc~~ ^{exc} canteens ~~exc~~ ^{exc} his ~~exc~~ ^{exc}

who were in the mill, being startled by the noise, looked out to see what was the matter." When Dennis saw them he cried out, "Och, ye rogues o' the world, run for your lives; for the division has fell in, and the provost is coming down with his guard; and every one of yeess will be taken." They were all out in a moment. "Which way is he coming?" "this way," said Dennis, pointing to the way he had came himself. "I am on picquet, and I just run down to give you warning." They all took to their heels in the opposite direction, leaving the field clear to Dennis and I; and we lost no time in filling our haversacks.

In our next day's march, we passed many dead bodies of French and Portuguese, lying on the road; and one part of it was covered with asses, which the French had hamstringed before they left them. It was pitiable enough to see the poor creatures in this state; yet there was something ludicrous in the position that the animals had taken. When thus cruelly lamed, they were sitting in a groupe upon their hinder end, staring in

each other's faces, seemingly in deep consultation on some important subject, and looking as grave and as dull as many an assembly of their *biped brethren* at home.

Nothing very particular occurred between this and the action at Sabugal. On that day, our sharpshooters commenced skirmishing at an early hour in the morning. The enemy fell back across the Coa; and, when we gained the heights above it, we found they had taken up a position on the opposite side, seemingly determined to make a stand. As we descended the hill towards the river, we passed a convent or chapel, half way down; at the door lay an old man, who had been killed with a musket shot, and a genteelly dressed Portuguêse was standing beside him; he spoke to us as we passed, but we had no time then to pay any attention to what he said. We learned after, however, by some of the men, who were following us with the baggage, that he had been hung up by some of the French soldiers, because he would not, or could not, show them where he had hid his

money. His old father who was lying at the door, had been shot, and his mother's throat cut. His sisters had been first violated by the monsters, and then cruelly used: one of them had her eyes blackened, and the other her arm broken. His life was saved by the French General, who came up just as he had been suspended, and ordered him to be cut down: such were the tender mercies of the French soldiery!!!

We had now gained the edge of the river; the French columns were posted on the height above us. We passed the river, under a heavy fire, and proceeded to ascend the hill. We could now see that more of our army had crossed, both to our right and left. As we advanced up the hill, we formed line. General Picton rode up in front of us, with his stick over his shoulder, exposed to the heavy fire of the enemy, as composedly as if he had been in perfect safety. "Steady, my lads, steady," said he, "don't throw away your fire until I give you the word of command." We were now close on them; the balls were whizzing about our

ears like hailstones. The man before me received a shot in the head, and fell. "Why don't they let us give the rascals a volley," said some of the men. The left of our line, which was nearest them, now opened a heavy fire; and, by the time the line was all formed, the French had taken to their heels. At this moment a severe rain storm commenced, and darkened the air so much that we lost sight of them completely: nor did we again see them, until the sky cleared up, when they were discovered, about a mile forward, scrambling their way over hedge and ditch without any regularity. The ground which they had occupied, now lay before us, strewed with the dead and wounded: and the Portuguese regiment belonging to our division, were busy stripping them naked. In this barbarous action, however, they were joined by very few of the British.

The divisions to our right and left had, by this time, succeeded in turning the flanks of the French army; and they were now retreating in great confusion. After waiting under arms for some time, we

were ordered to encamp on the ground we then occupied, where we remained during the night.

FINIS.





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